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Council launch initiative to slash heating bills

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Glamour girl

Bettsie swaps law for world of burlesque

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Fist of fury

Gethin enlists kung fu expert to boost training

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FIRST MAYOR OF ASIAN HERITAGE

Report by Tom Mason

A LANDMARK decision to appoint Walsall's first mayor from an ethnic minority background was made at Monday's meeting of the full council.

Members from all parties represented on Walsall Council and invited guests paid tribute to Labour Councillor Mohammed Nazir, who was chosen as the town's 636th Mayor and the first from a black or ethnic minority background (BME).

Mayor of Walsall Mohammad Nazir

Walsall mayoress Riaz Nazir

Councillor Richard Worrall proposed the motion to appoint the new mayor,saying: "It's a real pleasure and privilege to nominate Councillor Nazir as the council's first BME mayor.

"It's a real milestone for Walsall as a council – it has been a long time coming."

Councillor Nazir was first elected to represent St Mathews ward in 1988, and represented that ward again between 1994 and 2005.

He was elected to represent Palfrey ward in 2006.

When he won his first election he was only the second Asian councillor to be elected to Walsall Council.

Honour

He said: "In more than 600 years since the post was created I shall be the first from a black or minority ethnic background and it is a great honour to be Mayor of Walsall.

"Britain is a diverse country and this is one of its great strengths.

"Celebrating diversity and bringing communities together shall be one of the things I'd most like to work towards during my term.

"I'm always very much committed to serving the whole of the borough of Walsall."

The former chair of West Midlands Police Authority was joined by his wife the new Mayoress Riaz Nazir in the council chamber to receive their robes and begin their duties as the borough's representatives.

The couple have chosen to support three local charities during his year in office, including St Giles Hospice, Acorn's Children's Hospice and Midland International Aid Trust.

Democratic Labour Councillor Pete Smith was chosen as deputy mayor with his niece Laura Barnes as deputy mayoress

Thanks were also given for the retiring Mayor, Councillor Dennis Anson, who raised more than £11,500 for charities during his 12 month term.

Seven-hour wait after death call to 111 line

SERIOUS concerns about the NHS 111 non-emergency phone line have been raised by a woman from Walsall who has claimed it took more than seven hours for a doctor to arrive after she reported the death of her husband's stepmother.

Pam Cavalier, of Bloxwich, said she called the number to report 92-year-old Olive Cavalier had died at her home in Alrewych Court, Aldridge. She had been battling lung cancer.

But the 69-year-old said she had to wait hours for a doctor to arrive and pronounce the death.

Exhausted

Mrs Cavalier, who lives with her husband John, 77, in Roche Road, said: "She died at about 7pm. The operator took all the details and at 8.30pm we had a call to say someone would be with us shortly. It got later and later and by 1.30am we were just exhausted. A doctor came at 2.30am and said yes she was dead. The nurse then came and the undertaker. It was 4.45am before everything was finished.

"The 111 line is not working and something should be done about it. It was traumatic enough as it was and it seemed an awfully long time to wait."

NHS 111 said the complaint was being investigated.

Bid to open shop toilets

TALKS are being held with shops in Walsall about opening their toilets to the public in return for cash under an incentive scheme.

Public loos have closed as part of Walsall Council cuts. It comes as Centro are proposing to introduce a 20p charge at the main Walsall bus station.

Council leader Mike Bird said: "We are talking to supermarkets and other shop operators. "We would like to think it helps the shops as well."

Similar schemes have been offered in other parts of the country.

■ See Letters – Page 7

Family in plea to find killers

THE devastated family of a takeaway driver who was murdered in Walsall have made an emotional plea for help to catch his killers.

Father-of-two Yasser Abbas, 28, of Birchills, was set upon by three men with weapons in a quiet cul-sac in Alumwell last month and died from his injuries in hospital.

His funeral on May 2 took place hours after his wife Shabam gave birth to a son. The former Alumwell Comprehensive School student also has a four-year-old son, Daniel.

Mr Abbas, of Raleigh Street, received head injuries during the attack in the early hours of April 13 and died four days later.

Mr Hussain, 45, said: "It's been five weeks now and the family are worried that no-one will be caught. If they are not found, it could happen again. We want anyone who may have seen anything to come forward. As far as the family are concerned, there's no motive. He wasn't doing anything wrong. He was a family man."

Detective Inspector Gary Plant, who is leading the inquiry, said police were keen to speak to anyone who saw a dark coloured vehicle leave the Ripon Road area shortly after midnight. He added: "We are following a number of lines of inquiry."

Runners turn park pink

Thin pink – huge crowds of women get ready to take part in the popular fundraising Race for Life in aid of Cancer Reserach that was held at Walsall Arboretum

THOUSANDS of women raised around £140,000 to combat cancer as they donned pink to run the Race for Life at Walsall Arboretum.

A field of 2,500 women and girls took part in the 5k run in the park on Sunday morning. It is estimated the event raised a total of £140,000 for Cancer Research.

Among those taking part was Kath Floyd from Perry Barr, whose 40-year-old daughter Ruth Hopson died of cancer in January.

Grandmother-of-five Mrs Floyd said: "There are teachers here from the school where she was a governor, St Margaret's C of E in Great Barr. She was also a teacher at Hall Green. Her sisters, her auntie, her daughter and her niece are all here too.

"Ruth got through breast cancer but a year later it came back, this time in her spine. It then spread to her liver.

"We first took part in this run in 2010 when she had breast cancer. When she died we donated £3,000 to Cancer Research from donations at the funeral."

Another pink-clad competitor was 51-year-old Alison Blair from Brownhills. "I've lost three relatives to cancer – two aunts and an uncle," said Miss Blair. "This is the first time I've ever taken part in the race, but I think I'll certainly be doing it again."

Nikki Bastable of Webster Road, Willenhall, also took part in the race. Her husband Paul is fighting bone marrow cancer.

Important

"I did the race last year as well," said 47-year-old Mrs Bastable. "Raising money for Cancer Research is really important for research and events like this help everybody.

"My husband Paul is 54 and he's currently receiving treatment for bone marrow cancer, his second lot of chemotherapy. He was only diagnosed six weeks ago.

"There are around 12 of us here from West Walsall E-Act Academy, as we lost one of our teachers to cancer and we have another teacher who's fighting cancer at the moment."

Marketing manager for the event, Sarah Southall, said: "It was amazing."

Year-long delay over decision on burial site

A FINAL decision over plans for 5,000 new burial spaces at a cemetery is not expected until next spring.

The expansion of Willenhall Lawn Cemetery is being considered by Walsall Council chiefs due to an impending shortage of burial space.

Around £120,000 has been set aside to explore the feasibility of the proposal.

But bosses say the study will take 12 months to complete.

This means it will not be finished until April next year.

Capacity

Council bosses have insisted there is a need to create room for more burials but the suitability of the land needs to be assessed.

It is anticipated the expansion of the site off Bentley Lane will provide spaces sufficient for another 40 years as the existing site is due to reach full capacity by 2016.

Walsall leisure chief, Councillor Anthony Harris said: "There's a real need to look at extending Willenhall Lawn Cemetery to accommodate a local need for burials in the area over the next 30 to 40 years.

"We're currently in the second month of a 12 month feasibility study which will consider the suitability of the site."

Police plan to close HQ

MOVES to close Walsall's police headquarters and transfer officers elsewhere in the borough are part of changse to create an 'efficient, modern, accessible service,' say West Midlands Police.

The proposals for a new partnership between the force and Walsall Council will see staff relocate from the current Green Lane base to the council's Civic Centre or Bloxwich station.

It has prompted concerns but Chief Constable Chris Sims said: "We are working hard to make policing more accessible and the proposed initiative in Walsall will help us to achieve that goal."

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Talks on double parking problem near store

MEETINGS are being held over tackling the problem of cars double parking in a street next to a Walsall supermarket.

There have been calls to stop cars clogging up Wisemore, next to the town's Tesco Extra store. Council bosses are to hold talks with supermarket bosses about the issue.

It comes after a spate of complaints from residents and shoppers, who say cars lining both sides of the street are making it difficult for other vehicles to get by. It is believed cars may be left there during the day while their owners go to work.

Tesco has a 750-space car park which is free to use for up to two hours.

Pensioner Tom Sturmy, of Beechdale, said he gets a lift to the store every week on community transport but the cars parking in Wisemore is making it difficult for other vehicles.

"People can't get through because there's just no space. And what about disabled people who need to get near to the entrances? It's about time someone did something to tackle this."

Tight

It is also claimed cars manoeuvring in and out of tight spaces pose a problem for pedestrians in a busy area also near Walsall College, in Littleton Street West.

Tesco said it was hoping to put down a single yellow line to prevent cars from parking there.

Regeneration boss Councillor Adrian Andrew said he would meet with the supermarket's representatives.

"It's an issue we've already picked up and we're working with Tesco to resolve the issue," he added.

The £55 million Walsall Tesco Extra store opened three years ago.

Borough job figures buck national trend

JOB queues in Walsall are getting shorter despite the hike in national unemployment.

UK unemployment rose by 15,000 between January and March to 2.52 million, official figures showed today.

At the same time, pay is rising at its lowest rate for four years as families face ever-tighter household budgets to cope with inflation.

An Office for National Statistics spokesman said the figures suggest the recent period of falling unemployment 'seems to have come to an end'.

by Simon Penfold

In the West Midlands unemployment rose 16,000 to 253,000. The number of people claiming jobseeker's allowance last month fell by 7,300 to 1.52 million, said the ONS.

The figures differ because not everyone classed as unemployed is eligible to claim jobseeker's allowance.

In Walsall the number of people claiming jobseeker's allowance fell by 195 last month to 10,150, or 6.1 per cent of the district's working population – still way above the national average of 3.7 per cent.

Difference

Walsall Council's finance boss Councillor Christopher Towe said: "I'm delighted the figures are down.

"It shows the council is making a real difference in Walsall.

"I'm particularly pleased for our young people. A million young people across the country are out of work."

He added: "We are totally committed to supporting businesses in Walsall and creating jobs for people."

Success of apprentice initiatives wins praise

WALSALL Council is celebrating the success of an apprentice initiative as figures show a drop in youth unemployment.

Latest figures indicate 465 fewer young people claiming Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) in April, compared with the same month last year, representing an 11.7 per cent fall – making Walsall the authority with the lowest number of JSA claimants aged 18 to 24 in the Black Country.

Council bosses hail the fall as a result of the multi-million pound Walsall Works apprenticeship scheme, which has helped around 120 young people start an apprenticeship with a local employer. A further 180 enrolled on pre-apprenticeship programmes.

Regeneration boss Councillor Adrian Andrew said: "Getting people back to work is one of the top priorities for this council."

M6 project

WORK on new gantries along the M6 will be completed this summer, ending months of road of weekend closures for motorists. The 22 structures are being installed as part of the £126 million scheme to create a fourth lane between Great Barr and Castle Bromwich

Getting in mela mood

Stella Porter, Ian Morton-Jones, Jassal, Akhlaq Hussain, Councillor Mohammed Arif, Glen Buglass and Nazir Ahmed promote Caldmore festival and Walsall Mela

PREPARATIONS are under way for an annual festival and mela which regularly attracts thousands of revellers to an area of Walsall.

The Caldmore Village Festival and Walsall Mela will be held during May and July and volunteers are being encouraged to help run the events.

The award-winning Palfrey Park will host the free festival this weekend – May 25, 26 and 27 – along with the Wasall Mela on July 7. Festivities will run from noon to 6pm on each day.

Attractions range from Afghan dancers and Asian pop music to Cajun sounds at this weekend's festival. The main Caldmore carnival will be held on Monday with a parade from Caldmore Green to the park on Dale Road starting at 2.30pm.It is the fourth year of the events and organisers are hoping this will be the biggest yet with crowds expected to top last year's turnout of around 20,000.

Councillor Mohammed Arif, who represents the St Matthews ward and is vice-chairman of Caldmore Village Festival organising committee, said: "We hope everyone, whatever their faith or language, will feel welcome at this multi-cultural event."

The Caldmore Village Festival Cup under-15s five-a-side football tournament will be held as part of the events on Saturday at the park from 1pm.

To get involved call Steve Breeze on 07970856148. See the website caldmorevillagefestival.wordpress.com for more information.

Outcry sees heathland proposals scaled back

CONTROVERSIAL proposals to create more heathland at a popular beauty spot in Brownhills by chopping down trees have been revised after concerns were raised by residents.

Fresh proposals for Brownhills Common have been scaled back from original plans to remove half the conifers. But campaigners say they do not want to see a single tree chopped down and will continue their fight to keep the common as it is.

The revised scheme had been drawn up after public consultation events and meetings between Walsall Council officers, the Forestry Commission and Natural England.

Petition

A petition with more than 1,400 names was submitted to the council in protest at the move to increase the amount of heath.

Under the revised scheme, heather will be encouraged to grow around plantations as they are thinned. All mature native broadleaved trees within plantations and heathland would be left. No felling would start before autumn.

Leisure boss Councillor Anthony Harrissaid: "There is a real strength of feeling regarding management plans for Brownhills Common and I am pleased that people feel so passionately about this important site and care about its future.

"We are working hard to get the balance right."

£40k work at village's skate park

WORK has started on the £40,000 revamp of a skate park in Norton Canes.

The project at Brownhills Recreation Ground, which is being spearheaded by Norton Canes Parish Council, is expected to be completed later this month.

The skate park, off Brownhills Road, has been used by youngsters for the past 14 years.

Six new pieces of equipment are being installed and the whole area resurfaced under the scheme.

Funding has come from Cannock Chase Council and the Veolia Environmental Trust.

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Mother fiddled £10,000

A DARLASTON mother who made £10,000 by swindling the benefits system has been handed a 12-month community order.

Kim Delaney, of Addenbrooke Street, falsely claimed income support between May 2011 and July 2012 and housing and council tax benefits between May 2011 and April last year, Walsall Magistrates Court heard.

The 27-year-old had started claiming benefits in May 2010 on the basis she was a single parent and had two dependent children. But she had been living with her husband, Shaun Green, since May 2011.

Delaney falsely claimed £10,055.29 in benefits. She pleaded guilty to two charges.

Mr John Walker, mitigating, said she had no previous convictions and the benefit claim had not been fraudulent from the outset.

Mr Walker said her four-year-old child had autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Delaney was handed a 12-month community order, with supervision, ordered to complete the benefit fraud workbook, pay £100 costs and £60 victim surcharge.

Watchdog is tough on vote fraud

WALSALL is one of 15 areas to be monitored by the Electoral Commission as it gets tough on voting fraud.

Plans to restrict postal voting and introduce ballot box checks are being mooted by the watchdog. It comes as the Electoral Commission recognise a 'consistent underlying level of concern among voters' over electoral fraud.

Walsall is one of 15 areas being monitored as the commission carries out research before publishing a report in the autumn. The 15 hotspots, also including Birmingham, have a history of cases of alleged fraud.

Mike Bird, leader of Walsall Council, said he welcomed the move. "As far as I'm concerned, there's no room for those kind of antics," he said. "Voting is a democratic process and anyone who interferes with it deserves to feel the full force of the law."

New boilers for some homes with big heating bills

BOILERS will be replaced in 17 modern homes on a Walsall estate after residents complained they had been left struggling to pay huge electric bills.

Tenants living in Accord Group properties in Finery Road and Iron Mill Way, Darlaston, reported exceptionally high energy charges, sparking an investigation.

A special energy consultant has been appointed to calculate the average heating bill for each house and residents were asked to provide copies of their bills for the past year during a surgery held on the estate.

The Accord Group has announced that boiler systems will be replaced in the larger four and five-bedroomed houses, but a decision about smaller properties will not be made until the investigation is completed.

Retired shop assistant Sylvia Kelly, aged 61, who lives with husband James, 55, in a two-bedroom bungalow in Iron Mill Way, pays around £85 a month and heats one room for three hours in the evenings.

Soaring

She said: "The people in the two-bedroom and three-bedroom houses are struggling to pay their bills just as much. I'm disgusted. I won't let this rest. We just want our bills to be lower."

Darlaston South Councillor Doug James said the soaring costs had forced some tenants to move out, others were switching off their heating and one resident had gone to the expense of installing a new central heating system.

Councillor James said: "After two years of high energy bills, I think this will be welcomed."

Accord Group spokeswoman Claire Morrall said: "The Accord Group has made a commitment to replace the NIBE boilers in the larger four and five bedroomed houses on the estate and we have also appointed a special energy consultant to calculate the average heating bill for each house type."

More than 2,300 bins still go uncollected

MORE than 2,300 bins each fortnight are still going uncollected in Walsall for containing the wrong rubbish, the council has revealed.

by Catherine Dalton

The figures come as a controversial recycling crackdown reaches the six-month mark. Walsall Council chiefs have revealed the number of bins not collected for containing the wrong items has fallen – but say more still needs to be done.

A fresh leaflet campaign is being launched with information being sent to all of the borough's 100,000 households.

Binspectors

The recycling crackdown was first launched on November 19 and saw officers, dubbed 'binspectors', checking green bins for the wrong items.

Those found to contain things such as food, nappies and household waste were given a yellow sticker and were not emptied.

It sparked a flurry of complaints from angry residents.

One in 10 bins were refused when the crackdown first launched but this has now fallen to around one in 50. The average number of bins not emptied over the past nine collections is 2,369 or around 1.8 per cent.

Councillor Tom Ansell, environment cabinet chief, said: "Over the last few months we have taken a number of actions to try and reduce the volume of contaminated recycling.

"It is great to see that our messages are getting through but we still need to make further improvements and we will continue striving to make people aware of what they can and can't recycle."

The campaign was launched after recycling rates fell to 45 per cent in 2011-12 and around 41 per cent in 2012-13.

Councillor Ansell added: "We have weekly statistics outlining items which are incorrectly put out for recycling and it's fair to say there are some items which persistently appear and we are working hard to stamp this out."

Bungling bank raider jailed

A MEMBER of a gang who smashed their way into a bank using a sledgehammer has been sentenced to 14 months in prison after being told the raid was 'doomed to failure'.

Michael Cook, of Ashbourne Road, Heath Town, was among a group of men who tried to break into a cash machine at Barclays Bank in Wolverhampton Street, Willenhall, just after 11pm on February 20. The 33-year-old was caught nearby in possession of a torch when the alarm alerted security guards and police.

He has been jailed after admitting burglary at Wolverhampton Crown Court. The court was told he had a range of previous convictions, including burglary and theft.

Judge Robin Onions said: "This was a burglary that was always doomed to failure."

Great bake off to help charity

Sweet idea – Carly Garratt and son Leo, Beckie Upton and son Harry, Gemma Harper and son Ethan, Victoria Roden and Katie Bullock are all lending their support to the cake bake in aid of the MS Society

SWEET treats will be on offer at a church hall when friends get baking for charity. Katie Bullock and her friend Victoria Roden are being helped by former school pals Gemma Harper and Carly Garratt to turn out cakes galore for the sale in Aldridge on June 1.

The women have been inspired by Victoria's mother, Jane Caldicott, who has Multiple Sclerosis, to raise money for the MS Society.

Their first sale last year raised £600 for the charity. The friends, who went to Aldridge Comprehensive, hope this year's event will bring in even more.

Katie, a 32-year-old Lloyds TSB advisor, said: "We were overwhelmed by how many people supported us. We thought we'd got too many cakes and that we'd be left in the embarrassing situation of bringing half of them back home again but they all went.

"It's surprising by how much money you can raise selling teas, coffees and cake, so we decided to try again.

"We're more organised this time round. Last year's raffle was a bit last-minute but we've been given some fantastic prizes for this one."

The sale will be held at St Thomas Church on the Lazy Hill estate from 12pm to 2pm on June 1.

■ More Aldridge news on page 20

NEWS in brief

Car enthusiasts in tribute to Ryan

SUPERCAR enthusiasts travelled to display their treasured motors and remember a former club member who died in an accident.

Up to 80 drivers gathered in Wolverhampton ahead of the screening of the new Fast and Furious 6 movie to pay respects to 25-year-old Ryan Husted.

The car enthusiast from Bloxwich died after his motorbike was involved in a collision in Cresswell Crescent in March.

He had been a leading member of Just-Kroozin Car Club. Family and car enthusiasts gathered at Bentley Bridge on Friday.

Authors talk about their history books

TWO authors will be talking about their new books at Bookmark Bloxwich on May 31.

Historian Stuart Williams, who wrote Reflections Of Old Walsall, will be at the Elmore Row venue along with former Walsall soldier Mick Power, whose new book is called It Puts Muscles on Your Eyebrows. They visit between 2pm and 3.30pm.

Tournament will involve 100 teams

A SIKH-organised football and hockey tournament will see more than 100 sports teams playing in Walsall this weekend.

The tournament, staged by the Walsall Asian Sports Association, will be held at Aston University playing fields, Birmingham Road, on Saturday and Sunday. The event will also see a Sikh heritage exhibition and fire walking.

Ramblers are to head for the hills

WALSALL Ramblers will be heading to the Shropshire hill country for a 12-mile circular walk on Sunday.

The walk in the Stretton Hills include a climb to Caer Caradoc and continues on The Lawley.

Non members are welcome, contact the walk leaders on 01922 637850.

Two charged after football disorder

TWO Walsall football fans have been charged after disorder broke out after the Saddlers' last home game of the season.

The 21-year-old from Willenhall and 18-year-old from Walsall were arrested last week and will appear before magistrates on June 5.

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NEWS

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

THIS blog is coming to you, Wifi permitting, from the island of Inchmurrin on Loch Lomond. As every traveller knows, Scotland can be gloriously sunny in May. This is not one of those Mays. I am reminded of the traditional Scottish greeting to holidaymakers: "Och, but ye've just missed a beautiful fortnight."

❒ ❒ ❒

THERE are three of us boating around the isles; myself, my younger brother and my old mate Lennox. We are not as young as once we were and we did the sum of all the medications we are taking to ward off the ailments of middle age. This is Three Men and Eighty-Four Tablets on a Boat. Some vessels announce their arrival with horns or whistles. Ours rattles.

❒ ❒ ❒

ON OUR Highland island, the storm struck at precisely 4.28am, whamming into the side of our cottage like a giant boot and striking dumb a flock of cackling oystercatchers on the beach. The little black-and-white birds had been joyously celebrating the dawn and then thought better of it and dashed for cover. By breakfast, Loch Lomond was a frenzy of wild water, white horses erupting from shore to shore with vicious little squalls corkscrewing through the tiny harbour. Not the ideal sailing day.

❒ ❒ ❒

I WAS reminded of the unkind old joke. What's that special word the Scots use to describe the conditions when it's perishing cold, the rain is lashing down and the wind blows you off your feet? Summer.

❒ ❒ ❒

NO surprises about Olivia Colman winning two awards at the Baftas. I bet she'll be back in 2014 for her excellent performance in this year's murder mystery, Broadchurch. And here's another prediction. Watch out in 2014 for a best-supporting award for that old trouper Anton Lesser as the senior police officer in Endeavour. He doesn't just play the part; he becomes it, bringing all sorts of twitching prejudices and paranoia to it. What a pro.

❒ ❒ ❒

DID you see the cops battering down the door of drug dealers in Liverpool this week as they broke up a multi-million pound drugs ring? It took forever. There was a time when the average front door parted company with its hinges after a couple of hefty whacks from the police battering ram. These days, steel-framed doors with five locking points, usually installed as part of a double-glazing package, can takes ages to smash open. Energy efficiency – the criminal's friend.

❒ ❒ ❒

EVERY day seems to bring another Tory standing up to declare that, if a referendum were held tomorrow, he would vote to leave to leave the EU. So you might get the impression that withdrawal is imminent. Dream on. All David Cameron is offering is a referendum four years from now, assuming he is re-elected, which is a fairly bold assumption. Meanwhile, the real action is taking place in the eurozone, now on track to become virtually a single nation, because the only way to make the euro work is to have one central bank and one budget. This brave talk of pulling out is just smoke and mirrors. Britain is threatening to jump off a train bound for Brussels when the train has already been diverted to Berlin.

❒ ❒ ❒

A READER tells me he got a bargain at an auction. He snapped up a Victorian stuffed dog for just £20, probably because the tail was missing from this much-loved pet of the 1890s. He asked the auctioneer: "If this dog were in pristine condition, what would it have fetched?" And the auctioneer replied: "Sticks."

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Thief stole phone from pregnant victim

A BURGLAR, who stole the mobile phone of a pregnant woman four days before she was due to give birth, has been jailed for 14 months.

The victim was at home with a young child and was known to Steven Griffiths, who had a history of stealing from people who trusted him, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard last week.

The 39-year-old knocked at the door of the house, in Bloxwich Road, Walsall, and asked to use the toilet, said Mr Mark Rees, prosecuting. The lawyer said she would not let him in but Griffiths had access while her back was turned and fled with her £350 mobile phone.

Personal

The victim said: "I was four days from giving birth and the phone was the way I kept in contact with my birthing partner.

"It also contained all my personal details such as banking information. The burglary left me feeling very stressed."

Griffiths had a drug problem and sold the phone for £20. The next day he stole two mobile phones, collectively worth almost £700, from a Walsall mother of two young children who had known him for seven years and had invited him into her home for a cup of tea.

Griffiths told her he had to go to church and took the phones without her knowledge on the way out.

He admitted selling her phones for £50.

Griffiths from Stafford Road, Darlaston, had previous convictions involving 41 separate offences including stealing cash from the homes of people he knew.

He admitted burglary and theft and was sent to prison by Recorder David Crigman QC who told him: "These were inherently mean offences with a very similar theme."

Mobile camera will watch the bus lanes

A MOBILE camera to film motorists who illegally use bus lanes in Walsall will finally be introduced next month – almost a year later than it was originally expected.

by Craig Hughes

The crackdown on queue jumpers was agreed by Walsall Council last year but held up by 'technical glitches'.

Transport bosses say they are now due to launch the hard-hitting approach with offenders facing a £60 fine for breaches.

A car with specialist monitoring equipment will be used to catch on camera those motorists who illegally queue jump.

Amnesty

However, an amnesty period where warnings rather than fines will be issued is expected for the start of the crackdown.

Council leader Mike Bird said: "We're all set to introduce our special marked camera-carrying car on the roads of Walsall in June.

"Our message is simply not to break laws which are designed to help make people safe.

"There will be an amnesty period where we'll look to not prosecute but educate people and we'll be very clear when this begins and ends.

"We're looking at bus lanes in particular which have been a great source of complaints from residents about motorists who flout the rules."

The council had originally hoped to have it up and running by autumn.

But there has been technical hitches with the equipment which led to hold-ups.

The council agreed a new policy where those caught by the camera will be given a £60 fine, which will be halved if paid within 14 days. Those who fail to pay within 56 days will see the bill rise by to £90.

The council said the moves come after requests from bus operators.

The enforcement vehicle will also monitor school gate parking and help ease the problems caused for residents and other motorists.

It is estimated that the camera will generate about £15,000 a year, with the council saying money will be ploughed back into the initiative.

Cinema start date target

WORK on a multi-million pound cinema, leisure and retail complex in Walsall, with potential for 250 jobs, is expected to begin in September, if the scheme gets the go-ahead from councillors

Plans for the ambitious £12 million Littleton Centre development have been submitted to Walsall Council and are expected to be considered next month.

Cordwell Property, behind the scheme, say the aim is to be on site at the end of summer with the intention of launching in October 2014. The nine-screen digital cinema is to be run by Vue.

There has already been interest in opening restaurants at the complex off Littleton Street. It is anticipated the proposals will be considered by council planners in June.

High time for indoor park

Supporting the call for an indoor skate park, is professional BMX rider Ryan Taylor, of Walsall, with his mother Julie, left, who is campaigning for such a facility in the borough

MORE than 200 young BMX riders and skateboarders turned out to an event in Walsall to support a campaign for a new indoor skate park.

New company Ridaz Paradise aims to raise £60,000 to create a new indoor skate park in the borough.

An event was held last week at Leamore Skate Park to raise awareness for the campaign and was supported by more than 200 people.

Professional

Company director Julie Taylor, of Lichfield Road, Bloxwich, said the high turnout demonstrated that an indoor skate park was a much-needed facility for local youngsters.

Her 20-year-old son Ryan became a professional BMX rider after being recognised at the age of 13.

He has also given thousands of pounds of his own money towards the scheme to get it off the ground. It is hoped the rest of the funds can be raised through grants and donations.

Mother-of-three Mrs Taylor, aged 48, said: "There's a need for an indoor skate park. We are looking for a site in Walsall. We will need £60,000 to get it up and going.

"It's great that over 200 youngsters have turned up to support us, the atmosphere has been fantastic."

She added: "Ryan is known locally as a professional BMXer. He was recognised at Leamore Park when he was 13. He's been very fortunate to travel the world and he's given £15,000 of his own money towards this. He wants to give something back."

For more details, visit the www.ridazparadise.co.uk website.

Man's life is saved by club's machine

A LIFE-SAVING machine bought by nightclub bosses helped to save a man who suffered a heart attack during an evening out in Walsall town centre.

WS1 nightclub bought a defibrillator, which is designed to give the heart an electric shock, to keep at the club in Bridge Street around four months ago.

Manager Nick Parkinson said the move was prompted by a visit from street pastors who wanted to raise funds and buy one so it could be kept in the town centre.

Emergency

It proved its worth during a recent emergency, which saw a man suffer a heart attack at nearby Fever nightclub. The deliberator, combined with the quick-thinking actions of police and paramedics, meant he survived.

Mr Parkinson, 33, of Walsall, said the owner of WS1, Graham Pinches, had bought the defibrillator at a cost of more than £1,000.

The emergency had spurred the club to launch a fundraising drive to buy another defibrillator tol donate to the town centre.

Mr Parkinson added: "The street pastors wanted to raise funds to get one for the town centre. I'm grateful they approached us because it gave us the opportunity to get a defibrillator."

For more on raising funds towards buying another defibrillator visit mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/mandiepowell1

Mental health website help

A FREE online service has been launched for adults in Walsall to help improve their mental wellbeing.

Walsall's Clinical Commissioning Group has committed £60,000 to fund the Big White Wall for a year. It provides a website which gives an online service for people aged 16 and over experiencing emotional or psychological distress.

Dr Amrik Gill, chairman of the commissioning group, said: "By offering Walsall residents this online service we hope it will encourage people to seek support and, most importantly, help them overcome the isolation that can often be one of the biggest barriers to improving mental health."

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£1m for probe of ground

DEVELOPMENT of the multi-million pound Darlaston Enterprise Zone remains a 'key priority', says Walsall's regeneration chief.

Site investigations are due to start this summer to enable work to start on more than a dozen parcels of land.

Investigations are required become some of the land is heavily contaminated or has poor infrastructure which would hamper business development.

Partnership

The Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership has allocated up to £1 million through its Growing Places Fund to enable landowners to carry out site investigations to determine what work is required, so they can press ahead with its development.

Landowners have until the end of May to apply for a slice of the funding.

Regeneration chief Councillor Adrian Andrew has urged landowners to take advantage of the scheme, saying: "This is basically a once-in-a-lifetime offer for landowners to access this level of funding to carry out site investigations on their land."

Museum to celebrate its anniversary

WALSALL Leather Museum has unveiled a series of events to mark its 25th anniversary.

Rarely displayed items, including a collection of miniature saddles and a decorative bit belonging to royalty, will be going on show as the attraction celebrates its milestone.

An exhibition, called 25 Glorious Years of Collecting, will run from June 15 to November 2 and an illustrated talk by curator Mike Glasson will take place. It will chart the museum's progress from derelict factory to visitors attraction.

Francesca Cox, assistant curator, said: "This is a really exciting year for the Leather Museum and we hope lots of people can join us not only to celebrate our anniversary but also to enjoy the various activities we have got lined up."

A full list of activities taking place can be found at www.whatsonwalsall.co.uk

Lots of social workers want to work in borough

MORE than 100 social workers from around the country have expressed an interest in joining Walsall Council's troubled children's services division.

Bosses at the authority are hoping to recruit more permanent staff in the department to reduce its reliance on agency staff who currently make up half of the workforce.

The move is one of many being undertaken by the council after an improvement notice was served by the Government last year. Ofsted had branded the local authority's children's safeguarding services, and its capacity to improve, as 'inadequate'.

The council's interim assistant director of children's services, Sue Butcher, said 120 prospective employees from around the country had met with officials at the Council House last week.

She said: "We attended a recruitment fair and were inundated with interest. We decided to hold this supplementary breakfast meeting for those interested to find out more about the council and the jobs on offer.

"We kept having to find bigger rooms. We couldn't believe the response. It was the most fantastic meeting.

Talent

"We are keeping in touch with them because open vacancies are there and also to let them know what is happening at Walsall. This is a pool of talent."

The council currently has six social worker roles advertised on its website. They range from a principal social worker post, which attracts a salary of between £57,344 and £68,937 a year, to a trainee scheme, which offers a bursary of around £19,000 for a 14-month training programme.

Jobs as social workers in the children's team have a salary of between £30,011 and £34,543.

A meeting of the council's Children's and Young People Scrutiny and Performance Panel heard that changes to the way staff work, including the way red tape is dealt with, were already delivering results. A working group of councillors found staff were positive about the changes and had faith in the new management team.

Councillors have recommended the cabinet approve a list of measures to improve the service. They include reviewing the number of days staff can take in flexi-time, laptop provision and transforming outdated buildings.

Chair of the panel, Councillor Barbara Cassidy, said: "Councillors were impressed by what they saw and feel very positive about the way things are going."

Bid to turn towpaths into commuter routes

UP to £1.5 million will be ploughed into transforming miles of canal towpath in Walsall into cycle routes, under new council plans.

by Craig Hughes

Better lighting and routes from roads and footpaths onto towpaths could be built between Darlaston and Walsall town centre as part of the scheme.

It is part of a bid for Government funding by Walsall Council chiefs, who have drawn up plans covering more than four miles of waterways.

The aim is to encourage hundreds of extra people to cycle to work and around the borough, reducing the amount of cars on the road.

Waterways

Almost 400 people regularly use Walsall Canal with transport bosses hoping the figure will rise by a further 50 per cent.

Transport chief councillor Tom Ansell said: "We have some magnificent waterways in Walsall that we'd like to see used more.

"Better towpaths and a range of other measures will help encourage people to use them more to take a lot of motor vehicles off the road.

"So much so, in fact, that we think it will be the equivalent of journeys worth 250 kilometres every day. That's more than 150 miles worth of journeys."

More than four miles of towpath running from Darlaston to the New Art Gallery in Gallery Square, Walsall would be upgraded if the project gets the green light.

Councillor Ansell added: "One of the aims of this is to make the towpath easier for people to travel to and from work.

"It's close to thousands of homes that can be linked with areas that are in the process of being regenerated."

If the bid is a success, work will be carried out by the Canal & Rivers Trust with cycling group Sustrans also taking part.

Focus on reporting abuse

A CAMPAIGN to encourage victims to report domestic and child abuse is taking place in Walsall this week.

Policeand other agencies from Safer Walsall Partnership are joining forces to encourage the public to report abuse.

A community roadshow will be held inside the Saddlers Centre, where people will be able to get advice and information from police officers and other officials. Two films raising awareness of domestic abuse, child exploitation and other issues will be shown.

Residents will also be encouraged to sign up to a local community pledge, which involves them promising to report any form of domestic or child abuse.

Up-to-date advice and information about the campaign is available at the Walsall police Facebook page.

Pupils in poetic mood for new book

Published poets – these pupils have had their work published in a new book, including Hannah Fletcher, aged 14, with teacher Kate Barton, at the Blue Coat Academy

PROMISING poets from a Walsall school are celebrating after having their work selected to appear in a new book.

Students from the town's Blue Coat Academy took part in the national young writers competition to showcase their creativity with words.

And around 50 young people at the school, aged between 11 and 18, put pen to paper to come up with their finest verses.

Of these, 18 were selected for the Poetry Games publication for the West Midlands.

Anthology

The pupils' contributions are among more than 250 carefully-worded works chosen for inclusion in the poetry anthology.

Students from years seven to 13 got involved in the annual competition and used their own time to craft the final versions of their creations.

They were supported in the poety project by teacher Kate Barton, who helped lead the initiative at the school in Birmingham Street, near Walsall town centre.

Pupils were given creative freedom for the topics of their poems but the main themes revolved around the issues of global warming, the youth of today and emotions.

NEWS in brief

Poundland backs charity campaign

WILLENHALL-BASED Poundland has announced it will continue its partnership with a cancer charity for the fifth year.

The company is supporting Macmillan Cancer Support as the business aims to raise a record £1 million for the charity.

Poundland will focus the new phase of fundraising on selling wristbands to promote Macmillan's 'Not Alone' campaign, which aims to make sure no-one has to face cancer by themselves.

Around 50,000 wristbands will beavailable at more than 430 Poundland stores nationwide.

Model Erin to be mentor in series

BROWNHILLS model Erin O'Connor is to join Naomi Campbell as a mentor in a new TV series The Face which aims to find a new top beauty.

Also added to the line-up of the Sky Living contest is fellow catwalk star Caroline Winberg.

The trio will each lead a team of four hopefuls competing against each other in an effort to find a new face to front a world-famous brand.

College reveals secret of success

EDUCATORS from across the UK have been discovering the secrets of the success at Walsall College.

Walsall Adult & Community College was handed an outstanding rating by Ofsted inspectors earlier this year.

Guests were finding out from principal Maria Gilling about the standards of teaching, learning and trainee academies.

Get fit and have fun folk dancing

WALSALL Folk Dance Club are holding a barn dance to encourage people to stay fit and active.

The group meets every Thursday from 8pm and is hosting the themed event at Rushall Parish Church tonight (Thursday).

For more information about the dance or regular the classes in Leigh Road, call 01922 682512.

Leaders re-elected at parish council

THE chairman and vice-chairman of Essington Parish Council have been re-elected for the 11th year running. David Clifft is chairman with Mavis North as vice-chairman.

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NEWS FEATURE

IN MY VIEW WITH MARK ANDREWS

THE most interesting thing to come out of the Chris Huhne case was the nature of the institution in which he was held.

According to one of the television news reporters, it is up to prisoners whether they want to lock the doors at Leyhill Prison in Gloucestershire at night. Presumably this is to keep the riff-raff out. After all, you wouldn't want any wrong 'uns spoiling the party, would you?

The newsman also said the prison was very proud of its workshop, which knocked out an excellent line in window frames.

So this is a prison where the inmates are free to come and go as they please, and where they spend their days making window frames.

And suddenly it struck me. There are plenty of institutions like this all over the West Midlands, only the inmates are in the main, honest law-abiding people who would never dream of perverting the course of justice, or scarring the countryside with wind turbines or anything like that.

Only round here, we call them factories.

❒❒❒❒❒❒

IN WHAT must surely be one of the most imaginative claims under the Human Rights Act yet, Iraqi drug dealer Hesham Mohammed Ali, claimed he should be allowed to remain in the UK because he had tattoos.

Ali, who arrived via a people-smuggling racket 13 years ago, had his application for asylum turned down and was handed a four-year sentence for dealing class A drugs, had a half-naked woman tattooed on his chest. As you do.

"In Iraq, people with tattoos get stoned," he told the court.

Trust me, they do in Wolverhampton as well.

❒❒❒❒❒❒

MEMO to the gentleman in front of me at Wolverhampton post office. Having your mobile phone on speaker in a public place is seldom a good idea, particularly when you are going through the security questions with your bank.

And given that everybody in the post office heard your name, address, postcode, date of birth and your mother's maiden name, it might not be a bad idea to update your security settings.

❒❒❒❒❒❒

HERE'S a business idea you never see on The Apprentice.

Self-styled 'bacontrepreneurs' Justin and Dave have recently launched their new line in bacon-scented sun cream.

"Science has shown us that 10 out of 10 people prefer the smell of bacon to coconut, which makes this the most anticipated new product of the summer," says a press release for J&D's Bacon Sunscreen.

What a load of codswallop. Who'd want to smell like fried bacon? Now pork scratchings and you might be on to something...

Some of the delegates raising their concerns

Roger Davies from Yorkshire who played at the event

Jez Lowe headlined the showcase concert at Folk21

Folk for the future is what drives John

Folk clubs and small venues feel under threat. **DANNY FARRAGHER** spoke to the musician leading the fightback

THEY say an avalanche can start from just a single noise and while it may not be quite that dramatic, a rumble was started on Facebook by musician John Richards almost two years ago which turned into a national movement.

As part of this movement people from all over the Midlands gathered in Wolverhampton determined to find solutions that are crucial to their survival.

John, aged 62, originally from Coseley and now living in Worfield, Bridgnorth, has been on the folk circuit for more than 40 years and is passionate about the tradition and even more so about the local clubs where new acts cut their teeth and which he feels are being ignored both by the folk circuit generally and the national and local media specifically.

Musicians

Folk21 saw its first West Midlands Regional Conference descend on the Newhampton Arts Centre, Dunkley Street, Whitmore Reans where promoters, club organisers, musicians and folk fans came together.

The all-day conference was split into two parts with the delegates and visitors having their say in two seminar-style gatherings and then the evening putting on a showcase for new acts from around the country.

So where does the problem lie?

"The basis of Folk21 was that I was getting more and more depressed over a period of time as to the way the folk clubs were getting treated as compared to the festivals, the folk awards, the bigger concerts, radio and TV and I thought we were given very much the wrong end of the stick and that something needed to be done about it," explained John.

"I blogged this and a lot of like-minded people came forward and we decided something needed to be done, but what could we do?

"What we decided was to become a catalyst for co-operation. The whole basis of the regional days was just that, so that we can co-operate and see how we can start to solve the problems that the clubs and venues are facing."

Since Folk21 was started it has organised regional days all over the country; in Yorkshire, East Midlands, East Anglia, London and there is soon to be a Devon and South West meeting.

The perception of local folk clubs is very much at the forefront of what John and many others see as a major part of the problem.

John believes the local folk club scene has been dropped by the media because it is seen as a minority interest.

"The publicity which was so important to us has gone, so we are being battered on a local level," says John. "Even worse is that on a national level we are just criticised and laughed at. For example, BBC2 Folk Awards dropped the Best Folk Club of the Year, they don't talk about us any more.

"We have been referred to as the old 'beards and sandals' brigade which has nothing to do with modern folk."

"Now that is stopping younger people from getting involved in what we do, and my passion for this after playing and running folk clubs for 40 years is I want there to be continuity so the 'missing' 30-somethings and younger have a 'database' of folk clubs which they can carry forward for the future, because the way things are going they won't have and that would be a tragic waste."

People came from many parts, South Staffordshire, Nottingham, Leicester, Bromsgrove, Willenhall and Wolverhampton to name but a few, and all seemed to have a common aim of making folk clubs the best experience they can be. Common concerns which emerged were the average age of people at folk venues and the lack of publicity and communication between organisers up and down the country.

Problems

But John has no illusions about the enormity of the task.

"The main aim of the day was to get West Midlands folk club organisers together for the first time and to get them to share their problems.

"We also wanted to explore how the clubs and small venues could use publicity, PR, websites and social networking more successfully. I think we have raised a lot of issues which people are thinking and talking about and I think they will continue to talk about.

"I hope now through social networking there will be a lot of ideas posted, a sharing of ideas. Then getting everyone to start thinking about how we reach the 'non-folk' audience.

"That is absolutely key, it's what we do about raising the profile of the clubs and letting people know they can see brilliant musicians in intimate surroundings.

"My message to every folk club is to explore every possibility you can to be as professional as you can, in your publicity and marketing and make sure when you get the people into your folk club that you give them the best experience possible."

For information visit **www.folk21.net**

Musician John Richards who is leading the fight for survival for local folk clubs

THROUGH THE YEARS

1983...

A WOLVERHAMPTON councillor made history when he attended the 50th anniversary of the opening of a library. Councillor Ted Lane was also present at the official opening of the Heath Town Library in 1933.

SOCIAL Democrat David Owen was forced to abandon plans for a pre-election walkabout after being banned from Wolverhampton's Mander Centre. A spokesman for Mander Properties said the centre was determined to remain non-political.

A WALSALL man who saved the life of a woman drowning in a canal admitted he knew nothing about lifesaving. Robert Dyhouse said: "I just muddled through," after rescuing Gladys Lewis from the canal and performing makeshift artificial respiration."

1993...

ORGANISERS of Dudley's Beer Festival had a race against time to get 150 barrels of ale set up for the start of the three-day event. Volunteers worked into the early hours after a last-minute hitch delayed delivery of scaffolding for storing the casks.

WOLVERHAMPTON'S top stores quit the town's Chamber of Commerce and set up their own pressure group. Marks & Spencer, Beatties, Boots, BhS and C&A were among the big names to walk out in protest at soaring membership charges.

A BANANA war broke out in Wolverhampton after Gateway's supermarket cut the cost of the fruit by half. Market traders said they could not compete with the store's price of 25p a lb, which was less than the wholesale cost of bananas.

2003...

WOLVES sealed their promotion to the Premiership with an emphatic victory over Sheffield United in the play-off final in Cardiff. Goals from Mark Kennedy, Nathan Blake and Kenny Miller secured the 3-0 win.

HUNDREDS of young fans queued up for hours to meet chart-toppers Girls Aloud at Dudley's Merry Hill Centre. The band stopped off at the centre's new HMV store to sign copies of their album Sounds of the Underground.

A Midlands town hall was alive with the Sound of Music as 300 film enthusiasts attended the first ever Stourbridge Film Festival. Visitors from across the Black Country came dressed as nuns, Germans and members of the von Trapp family for the opening event entitled Sing-along-a-Sound-of-Music.

LETTERS

Free loo a sign of civilised society

DESPITE all our supposed differences, one thing that we all have in common is the necessity of needing to go to the toilet.

Having availed myself of facilities that ranged from literally eye-watering ones in India to sterile ones in Japan and one in Burma that also served as a pig feeding station, one of the conclusions I have come to is that the mark of a civilised and well-ordered society is the availability of free, clean, well-stocked and well-maintained public conveniences.

I was so impressed by the standards of a newly built one in Felixstowe that I was inspired to write to congratulate the council that had provided it.

Consequently and surprisingly I had a thank you letter from the mayor of that fine town, made the headlines in the local paper, the Ipswich Star (astonishingly the article is still online for those interested) and inspired a best loo competition in the Suffolk Coast area.

Essential

Now the question I would like to pose is that if a small town like Felixstowe can take pride in providing an essential service that we all need, why, even in these cash strapped times, are Walsall Council – not content with devastating the town centre with their bizarre parking policy – now proposing raking in yet more loot with their short-sighted policy of charging residents and visitors an unreasonable and exorbitant 20 pence to go to the loo?

If you work in the Town Hall you have ample facilities to ease your needs at no cost but apparently, like all people in their ivory towers, the needs of the rest of us can be disregarded like used toilet tissue .

BILL GREEN
Bell Road
Walsall

Rail service and a station at Willenhall

FURTHER to your report 'Revival of rail service is shelved to at least 2019' (May 15).

It is true that Centro have stated that they have pencilled in the restoration of the direct rail service between Walsall and Wolverhampton for some time after 2019.

They have also agreed with my contention that, under new locally determined franchise arrangements, it would be perfectly possible to invite bidders for the current London Midland franchise, to be let in 2017, to include in their bids a direct Walsall-Wolverhampton service with a new station at Willenhall – and other necessary capital works at Wolverhampton – for a half-hourly service.

The previous direct service, which as the then Transport Authority Chair I was closely involved in introducing, survived over a decade until December 2008.

It is simply not ambitious enough for Centro to say that nothing can be done until some time after 2019.

The new franchise in 2017 provides the opportunity that we should all be aiming for, and even that is more than long enough for anyone who has to endure the lengthy, congested, end-to-end journey on the otherwise excellent 529 bus service.

RICHARD WORRALL
West Midlands
Integrated
Transport Authority

LETTERS to the Editor

POST
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E-MAIL
walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number of the writer. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Sight loss support

SUPPORT for children and young people who have special educational needs or are disabled can make a huge difference to their lives and those of their families. The Government plans to make changes to this vital support but hasn't fully recognised the needs of children and young people with sight loss and the kind of support they need.

The Children and Families Bill is being discussed by MPs now. I am sure I won't be alone in being very worried about the impact these changes will have on children with a visual impairment in our area who rely on the support of local services. I want to let other readers know that they can take action to help make sure that the right support is provided to those who need it.

The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) is keen to hear from anyone who may be affected or is interested in finding out more about the proposed changes and how they can help make sure the Government gets this right. Get involved and voice your concerns by contacting www.rnib.org.uk/childrensbill or the RNIB campaign hotline on 020 7391 2123.

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NEWS

Move to cut bills

THOUSANDS of residents across Walsall are being encouraged to save on their gas and electricity bills under a new scheme.

The Big Community Energy Switch has been launched by Walsall Council to in a bid to help householders reduce the cost of heating their homes. It works by householders coming together to form a single buying consortium, enabling energy companies to offer cheaper deals.

The more householders who sign up, the better the deal and residents can sign up for free and with no obligation to tell energy companies they are interested in switching.

Once registered, the council will go to auction along with other local authorities to see which energy company will offer the best tariff. Residents have until June 3 to register their interest.

The scheme has been adopted elsewhere. In Wolverhampton families were able to make savings of an average of £114 on annual bills.

Regeneration boss Councillor Adrian Andrew said: "We all know the pain of increased gas and electricity prices but this is something we can do to help Walsall households who are struggling to pay their bills. Trying to switch alone can be daunting but this scheme is relatively easy.

"You won't receive any hard-sell phone-calls. Registering takes a few minutes to complete but it could lead you to make significant savings."

Visit the www.walsall.gov.uk/bigswitch or call 01922 652500.

Councillor Adrian Andrew, front, officer Scott Southall, officer Tony Morrison and housing manager David Lockwood launch the Walsall Big Community Energy Switch

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NEWS

Connie celebrates 100th birthday

Connie Johnston celebrating her 100th birthday with daughter Josie Long, 68, and son David, 60, in Willenhall

A WARTIME shop worker who travelled the Midlands restoring window displays after bombing raids has celebrated her 100th birthday.

Great-grandmother Connie Johnston, who was born in Darlaston Green, was the daughter of shopkeepers. When she left school at 14, she went to work in an office but then moved to work at Lewis's department store in Birmingham, rising from assistant to window dresser. She married husband Charlie and went on to have two children, Josie and David.

Connie ran a drapery store in Lower Lichfield Street, Willenhall, before she and Charlie launched another shop in Linthouse Lane, Wednesfield. She now lives at Oakwood Lodge, Short Heath, Willenhall.

Bid to ease traffic congestion

A FUNDING bid towards multi-million pound plans to ease congestion along one of the busiest routes in Walsall will be submitted this month.

A major revamp worth around £10m is being planned for the A461 Lichfield Road, which could include signalised junctions, pedestrian crossings and better bus stops.

However, previous proposals to introduce a red route along the stretch and around the town centre will no longer be pursued.

The A461 is the main link between Walsall town centre and Brownhills, with thousands of motorists a day travelling along the route.

Link

A red route proposal was initially put on hold almost two-and-a-half years ago after external funding from transport bosses was axed.

Council chiefs previously said there were ambitions to revive the scheme.

Council leader Mike Bird said: "The red route programme for Walsall and the West Midlands has now ended, however, we have set aside some money to address congestion along the A461 Walsall town centre to Shire Oak corridor.

"Preliminary designs have now been developed for the scheme and an application to The Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership for major transport scheme funding is due later this month."

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CLUB NEWS

Club told history of chocolate

TRYSULL & SEISDON WI

THE club welcomed chocolatier Jacqueline Smith to its May meeting. She began by telling the group a little of the history of chocolate.

In 1657 the first chocolate house opened in London, but it wasn't until 1847 that Joseph Fry made the cocoa into a paste that could be turned into a chocolate bar.

In 1824 John Cadbury sold tea, coffee and cocoa. He and his brother began manufacturing chocolate drinks and confectionary at the factory in Bournville.

Ferment

Jacqui told how the cocoa pods are harvested and cracked open, then the beans are put in leaf lined bins to ferment. They are then left to dry naturally in the sun, or they are roasted.

She said chocolate was very good for our hearts and blood pressure. It is also an antioxidant.

She demonstrated how easy it is to make a simple chocolate lolly and sent round samples of plain, milk and white chocolate. At the end of the talk the ladies were able to buy some of her chocolates and bars.

After refreshments Clare Preece gave the answers to a chocolate quiz she had prepared earlier. Mary Farquharson won the raffle and Clare won the competition for a chocolate cupcake.

At the next meeting on June 13, the competition is a beer tankard and Bob Bibby will take the group on a cake and ale trail.

Insight into hospice work by fundraiser

Fundraiser Jenny Chin was guest speaker at April's meeting, talking about St Giles Hospice

WALSALL CENTRAL EAST TOWNSWOMEN

NEW Chairman Mrs Patricia Jones opened both the April and May meetings by welcoming all the members and visitors, before dealing with the business part of the meetings.

In April she then welcomed speaker Jenny Chin whose subject was 'The Work Of The Hospice'.

Jenny is a fundraiser for St Giles Hospice Walsall and gave a very interesting and informative talk on the work and financing of St Giles.

The May meeting, due to a number of members being on holiday, a Beetle Drive was held. This was a wonderful success, which led to a better fellowship with the newer members who had recently joined from the former Mellish Guild.

A coffee morning was being held in May, with proceeds being donated to St. Giles Hospice.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday June 4 at Walsall Central Methodist Church in the Mellish Room from 7pm. The speaker will be Amanda Green whose talk will be 'Beanstalk Literary Charity'.

Members and friends are invited.

Hats off to demonstration

WALL HEATH FLOWER CLUB

MARYLIN Ottowell was the April demonstrator. Her title was 'Get Ahead, Get a Hat'.

Marylin began with the story of her son in Peru. The arrangement was on a large vase containing mango cala lilies, sunflowers, gerbras, yellow roses, begonia leaves and hyperican berries. Her next arrangement was in a red vase containing Singapore orchids, stocks, red tulips, red roses anthuriums and phlox, this incorporated a red hat.

A beautiful black and white arrangement followed for 'Graduation' with a mortar board.

Marylin also took members for tea at the Ritz, while the last arrangement was 'The bride' using wax flower, stocks, lilies, yellow roses and orchids.

The June 25 demonstration is by Isobel Liston, entitled 'Powerful Women'.

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NEWS

Countess gives Royal seal of approval to the Hoard

The county's prinicpal archaeologist Stephen Dean tells the Countess of Wessex about his work with the Hoard

THE Staffordshire Hoard has been given the royal seal of approval by the Countess of Wessex.

Countess Sophie paid a visit to the county council's new headquarters and chatted to the council's principal archaeologist Stephen Dean as she took a tour of Staffordshire Place.

Mr Dean played a major role in the discovery and excavation near to Walsall of the Staffordshire Hoard – the biggest haul of Anglo Saxon gold ever found. Mr Dean chatted to the Countess about his work and showed her some of the historical artefacts.

Secured

County council leader Philip Atkins, who accompanied the Countess on her tour, said: "She was very much a people person and was a very lovely lady.

"She stopped to chat to workers and staff, and we gave her a lot of information about Staffordshire and our regeneration plans." It came days after newly-discovered items from the Staffordshire Hoard were secured for the Midlands – only a week after a fundraising campaign was launched.

The Court Jewellers Wartski, who made the Duchess of Cambridge's wedding ring, donated the full £57,395 to needed to secure the 81 further items of Anglo Saxon treasure. They were discovered in November, three years after the initial discovery in a field at Hammerwich, near Brownhills.

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NEWS

Dentist chair shame led Denise to lose 21 stone

Denise Petty, from Beechdale, with son Carl before her 21-stone weight loss, which saw her drop an amazing ten dress sizes

Slimline Denise, right, in one of her old skirts with WeightWatchers group leader Beverley Longsden

A MOTHER branded morbidly obese by her GP has lost 21 stone in weight after an embarrassing trip to the dentist led her to take action.

Denise Petty, from Walsall, has dropped from dress size 34 to a size 14 after four years shedding the pounds.

Doctors told her last year a gastric band she had fitted was no longer working and she had been keeping the weight off herself.

It took a trip to the dentist to spark the mother-of-one into action. Miss Petty explained: "It was just so embarrassing. I went to the dentist and they could not get the chair to lift me up.

"I knew then that if I didn't do something about my weight I would be lucky to survive to the end of the year."

Depressed

At that time in 2009, she weighed 36 stone and could not get up the stairs in her house without struggling for breath. She was depressed after years of weight gain. "The weight creeps up on you," said Miss Petty, of Cavendish Road, Beechdale.

When she plucked up the courage to go to her GP, he warned her she was morbidly obese but it took the shock of the dentist incident to force a change.

The 42-year-old health care assistant was referred by her GP to a WeightWatchers group in Bloxwich, where she learned to 're-educate' herself about food and change lifestyle.

"It's about smaller portion sizes and about moderating what you eat," she said. "It does get harder to lose the weight and to keep the weight off – the temptations never go away.

"But when I go to my group, I can talk to the others, we can have a giggle and people understand your issues, which has been a great help."

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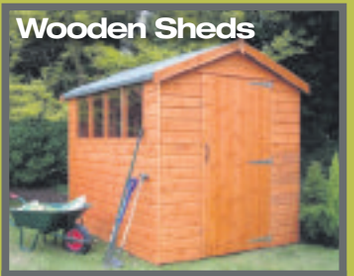

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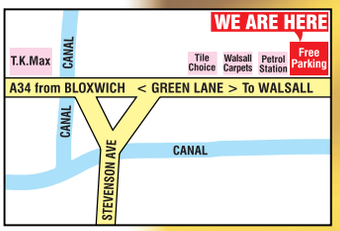

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NEWS

Fake gun robber put behind bars

A MASKED robber who burst into a shop armed with an imitation gun before snatching £500 worth of cigarettes has been jailed for five years.

Carl Ansell struck with an accomplice as shopkeeper Gail Southall was stacking shelves with assistant Phil Coley at Spar in Birmingham New Road, Lanesfield, in February, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

The raiders, both wearing balaclavas, frogmarched the pair to the back of the store and demanded the keys to the safe, said prosecutor Mr Geoffrey Dann.

After Mrs Southall told them her husband had just taken the keys and cash to the bank, the robbers grabbed the cigarettes and fled in a silver Peugeot 206.

False

The car had been bought second hand by Ansell under a false name and was displaying registration plates stolen by him from a similar vehicle parked in Walsall.

His car had been filmed by CCTV cameras parked outside convenience shops in Thornhill Road, Streetly, and Broadway North, Walsall in the 90 minutes before the February 14 Spar raid.

Mrs Southall, who has run the family business for 20 years, activated a panic alarm and police reached the scene moments after the robbers fled. A short time later a police patrol spotted 35-year-old Ansell in Dovedale Road in Ettingshall Park and stopped him because he appeared to be sweating profusely.

He answered a description of one of the robbers and the Peugeot used in the robbery was found parked in a near by street with the stolen cigarettes in the boot.

Ansell showed police where he had hidden the revolver used in the robbery, that turned out to be a BB gun.

Ansell from Linton Croft, Bilston, was said to have had a string of previous convictions, several for burglary, and was on licence from jail after an earlier sentence.

He was also on bail following an incident in which he butted a man at the Wolverhampton bar Chicago Rock last year, the court heard.

Mr Fergal Bloomer, defending, said: "These were both very unpleasant events but immediately the shopkeeper said there was no cash on the premises he concentrated on the cigarettes."

Ansell admitted robbery and assault and was sent to prison by Judge Nicholas Webb for 12 months for the incident at the bar and four years for the Spar raid.

The case against a second man arrested in connection with the robbery has been discontinued.

Jailed – robber Carl Ansell

Profits go down for foundry business

FOUNDRY and engineering group Chamberlin this week revealed falls in both profits and sales over the last year.

It was also announced chief executive Tim Hair is leaving in a year's time after seven years running the Walsall business.

Chamberlin's results for the year to the end of March were hit by a slowdown in demand, especially in the second half of the year.

It made a pre-tax profit of £900,000 – down £500,000 – on revenue, down seven per cent from £45.5 million to £42.3m.

But the engineering division saw an increase in sales.

Gorway Road campus to become home of UK judo

A UNIVERSITY campus in Walsall has been chosen as the location for a prestigious judo facility.

The British Judo Association's new Centre of Excellence in England will be at the University of Wolverhampton's Gorway Road site. The centre is expected to be opened in September, delivering training programmes to the association's junior and transition athletes aged 17 to 22.

It is envisaged as the sport's main training facility in the UK and the university has committed to invest in a state-of-the-art dojo to be used exclusively by the association.

Michael Chamberlain, director of sport at the university, said: "We are very proud to be recognised as having a sports campus that provides a perfect elite sport training environment for the country's top judo players and a team of staff who can look after their needs. Being chosen as the preferred venue ahead of what are arguably some of the UK's top sports universities is indeed a feather in our cap."

The Walsall campus hosted the Australian judo team in the run up to the 2012 Olympics.

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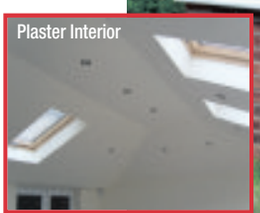

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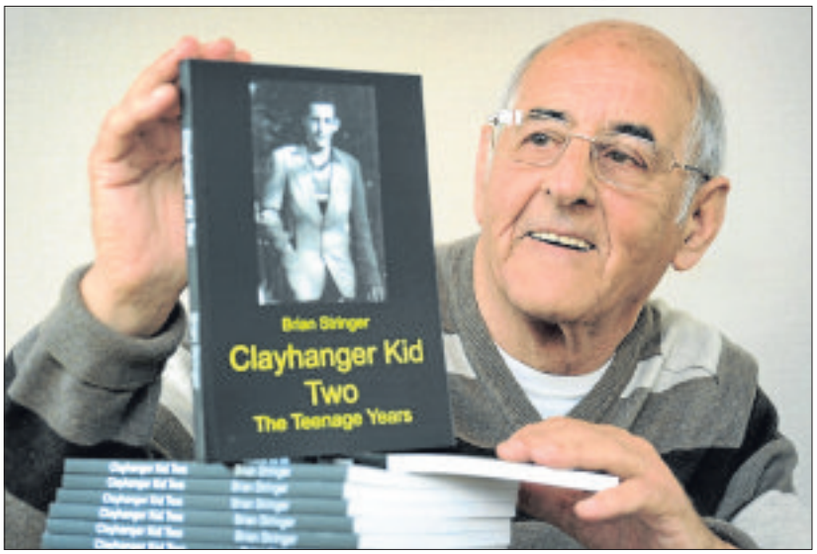
NEWS

Author's new chapter in the life of Clayhanger Kid



Former miner Brian Stringer with his second book, written after demand from people who had the first one

A FORMER miner from Brownhills has written a sequel to his first book about growing up in a small pit village.

Brian Stringer, aged 74, has put pen to paper to write The Clayhanger Kid 2, which is packed with stories and pictures exploring his life from when he was 14 until he turned 23.

The first 40 pages of the book also contain memories of Clayhanger from other villagers, dating back to the 1930s.

As a youngster, Mr Stringer lived in High Street with his mother Maud, father Cyril and younger brother Barry. The grandfather-of-four, of Park Close, said: "Following on from the first book, a lot of people got in touch to tell me about their stories of Clayhanger and they persuaded me to write another book.

"I've devoted the first 40 pages to stories about other people in the village. There is also an aerial photo of Clayhanger in 1953.

Dance

"Then after that I continued my life story. I was at the age when I had my driving lessons, I met my wife Maureen at a dance in Brownhills, and we got married in Walsall Wood.

"I had to sell my car to get married. I have written about how music changed and my time as a miner at Walsall Wood Colliery from 1953 to 1964.

"When I was working there four miners died in a roof fall. It had happened before I started my night shift," added Mr Stringer.

The first book sold about 360 copies and 400 copies have been printed for the sequel. It has been published by Excel Print in Aldridge and costs £6.

Mr Stringer will sign copies of his book at Brownhills Library on June 8 from 10am to 3pm. It is available to buy at Downes High Street Newsagent in Brownhills and at Chasewater Railway or call 01543 821539.

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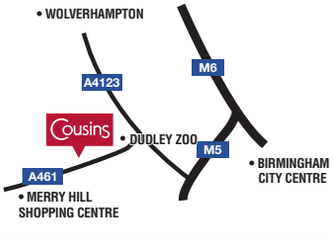

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MEMORY LANE

Visitors enjoying a miniature railway when the fair was held at Lower Pendeford Farm, Coven

The sun shines on the traction engines during the first at Lower Pendeford Farm in 1995

The cover of the original programme for the fair

Steam fair may lose traction at park site

THE first weekend in June will probably see the Wolverhampton Steam and Vintage Fair held for the last time in city's West Park.

By Alec Brew

Budget cuts at Wolverhampton City Council will mean that if it is to continue for the 20th time next year, a new site will be needed.

When it began, in 1995, it was organised by the Rotary Club of Wolverhampton at Lower Pendeford Farm Coven, under the chairmanship of John Wootton.

The pattern was established right away, with steam traction engines, large and small, vintage vehicles, a large model marquee and other attractions.

There was a parade of vehicles around the farm each day.

Free buses were laid on to bring visitors from Wolverhampton, and the event was considered a big success.

Subsequently, it came under the wing of the council's Outdoor Events Department, and was moved to West Park, and most significantly the parade of traction engines and vintage vehicles went through the city centre starting at noon on the Saturday.

The event was free to enter, and, weather permitting, grew into a spectacular annual attraction.

Each element of the event continued to be organised by volunteers with Councillor Malcolm Gwinnett and Jacki Wynn of Outdoor Events playing major roles, not least when Councillor Gwinnett lead the parade as mayor.

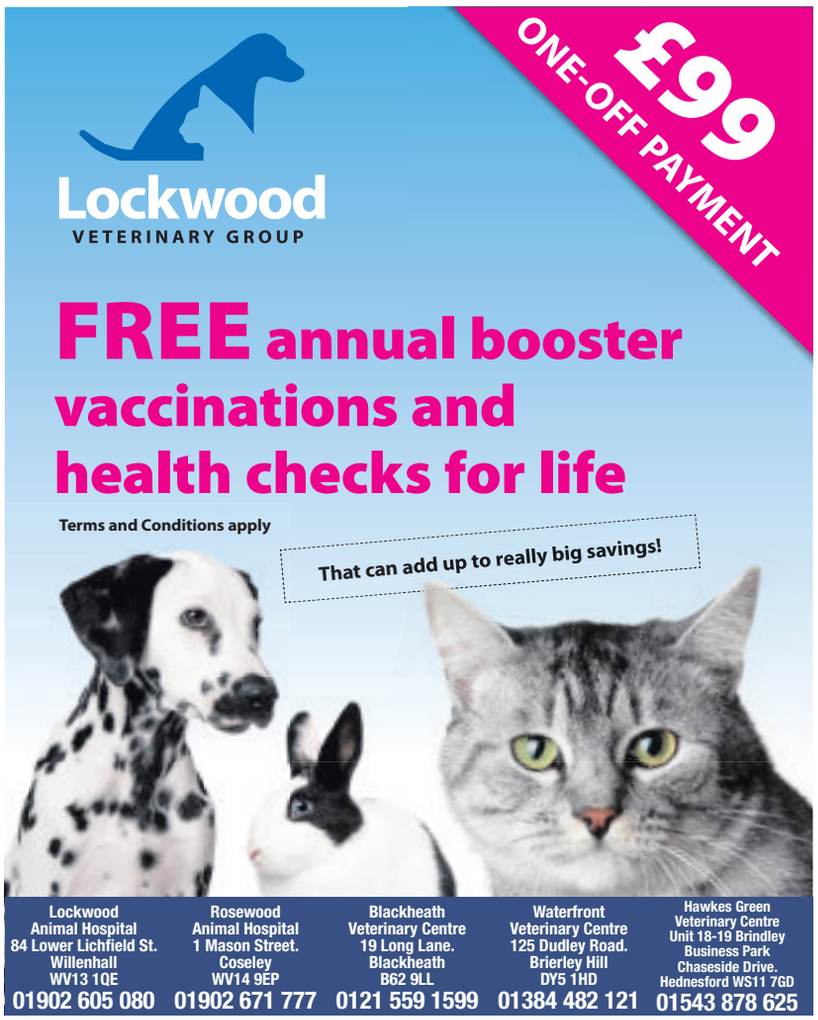
The basic elements remained in place, with a large outdoor fair in one field, and the steam and vintage vehicles in another, but new attractions were to be added, like an American Indian Village and an aircraft section organised by the Staffordshire Aircraft Restoration Team.

The parade brought startled shoppers to a standstill as steam rollers, armoured vehicles and fire engines suddenly rolled through Queen Square and around the city centre, the last such city centre parade in the country.

Council budget cuts have halved the budget for this year and will be cut altogether next year, so that if John Wootton and his team of volunteers organise the event in 2014 it will have to be elsewhere.

'American Indians' sampling a Hunter jet fighter cockpit in 2006

Lewis Squires of Tettenhall in the cockpit of a microlight



NEWS

Pizza for a year among prizes at charity night

STAFF from a travel agency in Walsall are due to hold a charity night to help seriously ill children.

The team at Virgin Holidays will raise money for the charity, Dreams Come True, with a fun-packed night at Walsall's Bank's Stadium on June 1 at 7pm.

The race night will also include an auction with prizes that include a signed Walsall FC ball and shirt, pizza for a year from Papa John's and entry to Birmingham Glee Club for six months along with a raffle for a host of other prizes.

Tickets costing £15 are available in advance from the Virgin Holiday store at Tesco Extra in Walsall city centre.

Landlady is a life-saver

Esther Bennett with flowers sent to her by the family of a man whose life she saved when he had a heart attack

THE manager of a popular Walsall pub saved a customer's life after he had a heart attack. Esther Bennett sprang into action as the drama unfolded in The Longhorn Pub.

She performed CPR to get the man, who was aged in his 40s, breathing again.Paramedics at the scene praised her for her quick thinking and her actions when the man collapsed. His relatives have sent her a bouquet of flowers to thank her for her crucial intervention.

Trained

Mother-of-one Mrs Bennett, who has run the Sutton Road pub for 12 years, said it was 'one of the scariest experiences of my life'.

She was upstairs when she was told a customer had collapsed in the bar area. The 53-year-old, who had been trained in first aid by Mitchells & Butler, rushed downstairs and started to perform CPR.

"We managed to get him breathing again," she said. "It was probably only a matter of minutes but it felt like hours."

Mrs Bennett said it had been around a year since she had received her first aid training. "It was like I just knew what I had to do," she added.

Finance controller stole £14k to pay credit card debts

A FINANCE controller who pocketed more than £14,000 from a pharmacy firm by altering cheques was given a suspended jail term.

by Shaun Jepson

Michael Bull, of Walsall, stole the money whilst working at the Darlaston head office of Jhoots Pharmacy, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard last week.

Mrs Alka Brigue, prosecuting, said the 30-year-old worked in the finance department and one of his duties was to pay suppliers.

The cheques would be signed by the firm's managing director but afterwards Bull would erase the correct payee details and replace it with M Bull or T Millington, his wife's maiden name.

Payment

He was caught when a supplier contacted the company requesting payment. It was found that a total of 20 cheques had been falsified and Bull had stolen a total of £14,196.05. The first five had been changed to pay M Bull and the following 15 had been altered to pay T Millington.

Mrs Brugye added: "During an interview with police, the defendant made full and frank admissions, saying that he stole the money to help pay off a long-standing debt through credit cards."

Bull, of Harden Road, Bloxwich, pleaded guilty to a charge of fraud by abuse of position and another of concealing criminal property between January and December 2012.

Miss Amrisha Parathalingam, defending, said that Bull, who had no previous convictions, was paying back his debts.

Explaining that it was 'just possible' to suspend the prison sentence, Judge Nicholas Webb handed Bull a nine-month jail term, suspended for two years. He was told to do 100 hours unpaid work.

Flashing signs retained to curb excessive speed

ROAD safety signs installed on four busy roads in Aldridge will stay in place as Walsall Council commits to funding their upkeep.

by Tom Mason

The pioneering Watchman signs, which flash up the number plates of speeding motorists, were installed almost four years ago in Broadway, Sutton Road and Northgate, Aldridge, at a cost of £60,000 per sign, funded by the West Midlands Road Safety Partnership.

In a road safety measure, the council has agreed to pay for the signs at a cost of almost £5,000 a year, after the partnership announced it would no longer be funding the signs.

Limit

Transport chiefs have hailed the signs a success, after statistics released last year showed that 95 per cent of drivers had stuck to the speed limit following their introduction.

Transport boss Councillor Tom Ansell said: "The watchman signs were initially funded through the West Midlands Road Safety Partnership.

"The ongoing maintenance and operation of the signs is now the council's responsibility and they will continue to be used in the future with the costs met from existing council budgets for road safety," he added.

The council has also been taking steps to reduce the speed of motorists in other areas, with a new 30mph zones brought in along the A454 Wolverhampton Road and Sutton Road.

Other work includes a review of speed limits. This could mean the introduction of more 20mph restrictions in residential areas across Aldridge.

Street cred as students learn to sell at market

STUDENTS from Aldridge School have been some of the first in the UK to take part in a market designed just for teenagers.

The National Youth Market saw youngsters from across the UK take control of 44 stalls in Manchester city centre in a bid to sell the most innovative product, with a prize for the winner.

Unique

After expert advice from the National Market Traders Federation, the team of students from the school in Tynings Lane set off in hopes of winning with their stall, called Scrumptious Sweets and Treats.

The team of Year 10 students included Daniel Boot, Rebecca Barley, Nicholas Headley, Charlie Thorn, Rebecca Suckling, Chloe Earl, Paige Jackson and Sarah-Jayne Bucknall.

Whilst the group of eight students did not win the top prize of £2,000, they did get a special mention from judges impressed by their creativity and selling skills during the market.

Special needs advice session

A DROP-IN session is being held for parents of children with special needs to find out more about support. They are for parents of youngsters aged up to 19 and professionals will be on hand to offer advice. It is being held between 9am and 1pm at Leighswood Children's Centre, Broadmeadow, Aldridge tomorrow (Friday).

Tech firm is growing

A DECISION to target export growth in Belgium has paid off for Aldridge information technology service providers Netshield. The firm based at Enterprise House, Shenstone Drive, employs 18 and expects export activities to double in the next 12 months. Half of its growth came from the UK with the rest coming from Belgium.

Artistic talents get a showcase

Artist Stephanie Nixon with members of her art group as they prepared to exhibit a collection of their works at the Aldridge Community Centre, in Leighswood Road, Aldridge

AMATEUR artists are celebrating the success of their exhibition which took place in Aldridge over the weekend.

A colourful collection of paintings, drawings and other art works were revealed to the public on Saturday for the two-day display held at Aldridge Youth Theatre, in Noddy Park Road.

Around 25 talented artist of all ages and abilities showed their work at the event.

Classes

They are members of a group of artists who regularly attend classes, run by teacher Stephanie Nixon, at the Aldridge Community Centre.

Linda Symonds, spokeswoman for Aldridge Youth Theatre,was given a preview of the event last week and said she knew it would be a success.

She added: "It's lovely for the artists to be able to show their work to the wider public."

Doctor Who is needed as Daleks plan an invasion

ALDRIDGE may well be in need of a Doctor when TV sci-fi villains the Daleks invade the village's latest attraction.

Aston Manor Transport Museum, in Shenstone Drive, is to be invaded by Doctor Who's most famous adversaries next month as the museum joins the 50th anniversary celebrations of Doctor Who. The adventures of the Timelord was first broadcast in 1963.

On June 23 from 10am until 4pm the museum will feature sci-fi memorabilia including life-sized Daleks, the pepperpot-shaped vehicles for a mutant alien race.

Activities on the day will include sci-fi fancy dress, a Dalek obstacle course, the X-terminate Factor and an audience with Doctor Who's greatest enemy when the Charity Dalek Squad visit.

Tickets cost £5 for adults, £4 for children and £15 for a family (two adults and up to three children) and are available in advance from the museum.

See www.amrtm.org or call 07914712073.

Dog show fun day for charity

DOG lovers will be able to show off their pooch at a charity dog show and family fun day in Aldridge on Sunday. Hill Farm, off Sutton Road, will be holding the event which will feature pedigree and novelty dog show classes. Registration at 10am, judging from 11am. There will also be pony rides and a bouncy castle.

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ALBUM REVIEWS

No shock as this Miss delivers another hit

Caro Emerald – The Shocking Miss Emerald

DUTCH jazz-pop singer Caro Emerald has made a big impact with her vintage glamour and catchy retro sound with hip-hop touches.

Her second album is not quite as instantly appealing as her delightful debut was but it sticks to the proven winning format. Highlights include the tango-tastic Tangled Up, dub reggae flavoured Black Valentine and 60s-style ballad The Wonderful In You.

Caro Emerald is in concert at Birmingham Symphony Hall on September 16 but it is already sold out.

Lady Antebellum – Golden

SLICK country rock love songs from one of Nashville's class acts, featuring the vocals of Hillary Scott and Charles Kelley with Dave Haywood on guitar.

Lady A are never going to be revolutionary but country music's top band draw more on Fleetwood Mac style mature rock than the Grand Ole Opry. All For Love sounds like a hit.

Gabrielle Aplin – English Rain

PLEASING semi-acoustic pop debut from a 20-year-old singer-songwriter from Bath. Includes her hit Please Don't Say You Love Me, new single Panic Cord and her chart-topping cover of Frankie Goes To Hollywood's The Power Of Love.

Aplin will be in concert at The Institute, Birmingham, on November 5.

Sarah Brightman – Dream Chaser

DRENCHED in strings and a 'new age' atmosphere, the showbiz soprano has created an appealing pop and classical cross-over album.

There are new songs and an interesting selection of covers. The latter includes an epic version of Elbow's One Day Like This, Sigur Ros melody Glosoli with new English lyrics by Chris Difford, Henryk Gorecki's gorgeous Symphony Of Sorrowful Songs, and the Cocteau Twins' Eperdu.

The final track, aptly entitled Closer, is a song arrangement of a section of Mike Oldfield's opus Tubular Bells.

Caro Emerald – second album out

James Blake – Overgrown

WITH his woozy electronic arrangements and plaintive, vulnerable, emotional voice, Londoner Blake is like a soul singer for the dubstep/drum 'n' bass generation.

If his debut album was so distinctive it made people take notice, his second has more substance, though that seems a strange word for a sound so ethereal it could float away on a breeze.

His voice is akin to Aaron Neville and Antony Hegarty, his electro-soul is original, yet sometimes akin to Brian Eno, Thom Yorke and The XX

Rapper RZA guests on Take A Fall For Me. Highlights include the haunting Retrograde, the urban soundscape of Life Round Here and Blake hinting at his admiration of Joni Mitchell on Our Love Comes Back.

James Blake is in concert at The Institute, Birmingham, on September 21.

Billy Ocean – Here You Are

WHEN the going gets tough, the tough sing covers. That may be a little harsh as Ocean has got a nice soulful voice to croon such songs here as A Change Is Gonna Come, Cry Me A River, You Send Me and No Woman No Cry. He even tackles one from the Sinatra songbook, It Was A Very Good Year.

But the overall feel is rather cruise ship cabaret.

Billy Ocean is performing at Lichfield's Garrick Theatre on May 29.

David Bowie – Aladdin Sane

TO mark its 40th anniversary, Bowie's sixth album – one of the glam rock era classics alongside Ziggy Stardust and Diamond Dogs – has been remastered by Ray Staff at London's Air Studios.

He cut the original LP recorded at Trident Studios and received praise for remastering Ziggy on its anniversary.

As for the actual music, it still sounds terrific from the driving opener Watch That Man via the demented doo-wop of Drive-In Saturday, soul stomper Panic In Detroit and classic rock song The Jean Genie with one of the all-time great guitar riffs.

Leon Burakowski

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What's On! Walsall

REVIEW

Eddie Izzard, NIA, Birmingham

A MASTER of rambling, absurdist humour, only perhaps Paul Merton can get close to Eddie Izzard when it comes to bizarre flights of fancy.

But the self-proclaimed 'action transvestite' never really seemed to hit top gear in Birmingham last Wednesday night. Maybe it was the venue, the humour evaporating in the cavernous environs of the NIA. It would have hit home at a packed Symphony Hall or Hippodrome rather than a half-empty arena.

Izzard, dapper in a suit with wine-red nail varnish and high heels, did not disappoint as he talked his amusing rubbish for nearly two hours. It seemed like stream of consciousness but must have been structured. The Force Majeure tour's 'God' theme remained vague and pointless.

There were wonderful surrealist episodes featuring ghost cows, a banjo-playing Kraken and gold-mining bling moles in sports cars, all as disjointed as the Tweets from his fans screened before the show and during the 20-minute interval.

His thoughts on dressage – 'only useful if you want to park a horse in a cupboard' – were priceless. But his heavy-handed political references, regularly referring to 'fascists' and suggesting Mrs Thatcher sits next to General Pinochet in hell, fell with a clunk whilst his imagination otherwise soared.

Leon Burakowski

Texas make a long overdue return to celebrate 25 years

Glamorous lawyer briefs encounters

STAR of An Evening of Burlesque Bettsie Bonbon is not just a pretty face.

Bettsie, who will be bringing her show to Wolverhampton Grand Theatre tomorrow night (Friday), studied law at university, got a good degree and went on to become an underwriter at Lloyds of London.

However, a few years ago, Bettsie decided to concentrate on a career involving figures of a very different nature, becoming a full-time burlesque performer, and she says she has never looked back.

Parody

Now also a teacher at The London Academy of Burlesque, Bettsie said: "There are so many misconceptions regarding what a burlesque show is all about.

"It's very tongue in cheek and I think more people are realising that now. Burlesque is the Italian word for parody."

"Burlesque and variety, the two go hand in hand," added Bettsie. "So expect the glamour and the girls in the show to be interspersed by equally outrageous speciality acts."

Women regularly outnumber men in auditoriums on An Evening of Burlesque's tour.

Contact the box office on 01902 429212.

More than just a pretty face – burlesque artist Bettsie Bonbon

IN THEIR 25th anniversary year Texas release a new studio album this week and return in November with a UK tour including a headline show at the Symphony Hall, Birmingham.

Texas's eighth album, The Conversation, is their first in eight years and the latest in a career that has seen the band sell over 30 million albums worldwide. Their multi-platinum albums include White on Blonde, The Hush and a Greatest Hits including such tracks as their 1989 debut I Don't Want A Lover, Say What You Want and In Our Lifetime.

Guitarist

This overdue return features tracks written and produced by founder members of the Glaswegian band singer/guitarist Sharleen Spiteri and bassist Johnny McElhone, alongside collaborations with singer-songwriter Richard Hawley and former Suede guitarist Bernard Butler.

The album was recorded in Glasgow, London and at Richard Hawley's studio in Sheffield for a marriage of Hawley's 50s rock'n'roll frills and the Texas sound.

Texas play the Symphony Hall on November 18. Tickets start from £37. Call 0121 345 0600.

Texas singer Sharleen Spiteri

Join trip to The Planets

EVER wondered what it is like to play in an orchestra? Or conduct The Planets?

Be part of the Philharmonia Orchestra through a free Universe of Sound digital installation of Holst's famous work, allowing you to explore an orchestra using touch screens and planetarium-style projections at Birmingham Municipal Bank at 300 Broad Street from this Saturday to June 16, 11am to 6pm.

Classical music at university hub

IN June the Performance Hub – arts venue for the University of Wolverhampton Walsall Campus – will host soloists John Mills and James Lisney.

On June 1 classical guitarist John Mills presents a concert celebrating virtuoso guitarist Andres Segovia. On June 8 pianist James Lisney will give a recital including pieces by Schumann. See performancehub.eventbrite.co.uk for tickets or further information.

Comic and singer at charity event

A CHARITY night is to be held at a social club in Willenhall in aid of St Giles Hospice. The event will be held at Shepwell Green Social Club, Bilston Lane, on May 31 from 7.30pm.

The fundraising evening will feature singer Tony Gold, a comedian, raffle and buffet. Tickets for the event cost £4. Call 07854 978610 or 07759 029295.

3D ballet will be live from Russia

SWAN Lake performed at the Mariinsky Theatre, St Petersburg, is being beamed live to more than 100 cinemas in 3D, including Walsall Showcase, on June 6 at 6.15pm

Seniors in concert

WALSALL Senior Citizens Orchestra Concert will be in concert at the Forest Arts Centre in Leamore at 2pm on June 6. Tickets are £1 on the door.

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SATURDAY'S TV 25.05.13

Listings supplied by Press Association

CHOICE

Oliver Coleman

Casualty
BBC1, 9.30pm
Making a mistake at work for most of us isn't great, but usually it means a few groans and a slap on the wrist. That's not the case for medical professionals, whose errors can have far-reaching consequences for their patients and their families – as Tom is beginning to realise. But it's his confidence that's taken a real beating following a recent misdiagnosis, and it's going to take a lot of hard work for him to get it back. Meanwhile, in one of the week's most moving storylines, Tess tries to help a young woman with a bleak future.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Nigel Slater's Simple Suppers. (R) **12.00** BBC News; Regional News; Weather. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** Live Athletics: Great Manchester City Games. **2.30** Helicopter Heroes. (R) **3.15** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.15** A Question of Sport. (R) **4.45** Pointless Celebrities. (R) **5.35** Formula 1: Monaco Grand Prix Qualifying.
6.50 BBC News; Regional News; Weather.
7.10 The Voice UK. Holly Willoughby and Reggie Yates host the final battle show, by the end of which Jessie J, Tom Jones, Danny O'Donoghue and Will.i.am will be one step closer to choosing their acts.
9.20 The National Lottery Draws. Jenni Falconer sets the balls rolling to decide the all-important numbers.
9.30 Casualty. Tom takes the lead when a baby is rushed in with breathing difficulties, and having previously failed to diagnose a youngster's meningitis, he is determined to be thorough.
10.20 BBC News; Weather.
10.40 Michael McIntyre's Comedy Roadshow. The comedian is joined by Kevin Bridges, Daniel Sloss, Milton Jones and Craig Campbell at Glasgow's Theatre Royal; (R) National Lottery Update.
11.25 Film: Eagle Eye. (2008) Two strangers go on the run from the authorities after receiving phone calls warning their lives are in danger. Thriller, with Shia LaBeouf, Michelle Monaghan and Rosario Dawson.
1.15 Weatherview. **1.20** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 This Is BBC Two. **6.45 Film:** Stage Door. (1937) **8.15 Film:** Two Tickets to Broadway. (1951) **10.00** A History of Scotland. (R) **11.00** Map Man. (R) **11.30** Just a Minute. (R) **12.00** The Chef's Protege. (R) **12.30** The Chef's Protege. (R) **1.00** The Chef's Protege. (R) **1.30** The Chef's Protege. (R) **2.00** The Chef's Protege. (R) **2.30** Coast. **3.00** Auction Hero. (R) **4.00** Antiques Road Trip. **5.00** Flog It! (R)
6.00 Golf: PGA Championship. The third day from Wentworth.
7.00 Chelsea Flower Show 2013. Alan Titchmarsh is joined by Joe Swift and Nicki Chapman to observe the traditional mass sell-off, in which crowds jostle for the most sought-after plants and flowers.
8.20 Dad's Army. Mainwaring's men pose as traitors to see how the residents of Walmington-on-Sea would deal with genuine Nazi infiltrators in their midst. (R)
8.50 QI. Stephen Fry is joined by Sandi Toksvig, John Lloyd, Johnny Vegas and regular panellist Alan Davies on the quiz, in which the host asks hypothetical questions. (R)
9.20 David Bowie – Five Years. Exploring five key years in the singer's career, which saw him redefine himself as an artist by adopting different personas – including Ziggy Stardust and the Thin White Duke.
10.50 Film: The Man Who Fell to Earth. (1976) Nicolas Roeg's sci-fi drama, starring David Bowie, Rip Torn, Candy Clark and Buck Henry.
1.05 Film: The Wackness. (2008)
2.40 This Is BBC Two. **5.55 Film:** The Mad Miss Manton. (1938)

ITV

6.00 CITV: Special Agent Oso. **6.10** Special Agent Oso. **6.25** The Hive. (R) **6.35** The Hive. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan. (R) **6.55** Dino Dan. (R) **7.05** Canimals. (R) **7.15** Canimals. (R) **7.20** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **7.35** Ultimate Spider-Man. **8.00** Jessie. **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Dinner Date. (R) **9.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. (R) **10.15** My Tasty Travels with Lynda Bellingham. (R) **11.15** Saturday Farm. **12.15** ITV News; Weather. **12.25** All Star Mr & Mrs. (R) **1.25** River Monsters. (R) **2.25** The Chase. (R) **3.25** Midsomer Murders. (R) **5.25** Regional Programme ; Weather.**5.45** ITV News; Weather.
6.00 You've Been Framed! Full Throttle. Harry Hill narrates a selection of comical clips filmed by viewers on their camcorders and mobile phones, featuring thrill-seekers, show-offs and painful-looking accidents. (R)
7.00 Live UEFA Champions League Final. Borussia Dortmund v Bayern Munich (Kick-off 7.45pm). Coverage of the showpiece match at Wembley Stadium, where the Bundesliga clubs contest the prestigious trophy. Subsequent programmes subject to change.
10.15 ITV News; Weather.
10.30 Film: Crank. (2006) An assassin is poisoned and resorts to desperate measures to keep himself alive long enough to exact a fitting revenge. Action thriller, starring Jason Statham, Amy Smart and Jose Pablo Cantillo.
12.10 Jackpot247. Interactive gaming. **3.00** The Starter Wife. (R) **3.45** ITV Nightscreen. Text-based information service.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 The Hoobs. (R) **6.35** The Hoobs. (R) **7.00** British Rallycross. **7.25** The Grid. **8.00** The Morning Line. **9.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **10.00** Frasier. (R) **10.30** Frasier. (R) **11.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.35** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.05** The Simpsons. (R) **12.35** Heston's Fantastical Food. (R) **1.40** Channel 4 Racing. Live coverage from Haydock Park, Goodwood and York. **4.10** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.40** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.10** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.40** Come Dine with Me. (R)
6.15 Come Dine with Me. Stelios Michael hosts the final night in Hastings, East Sussex, hoping to impress his guests with a Greek-inspired evening, before the winner of the £1,000 prize is announced. (R)
6.40 Channel 4 News.
7.00 Film: Titanic. (1997) A society girl falls in love with a penniless artist during the liner's ill-fated voyage. James Cameron's Oscar-winning romantic drama, starring Kate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio.
10.40 Film: 48 Hrs. (1982) A hard-bitten cop temporarily releases a fast-talking criminal from prison to help him track down two escaped fugitives. Comedy thriller, starring Nick Nolte, Eddie Murphy, Annette O'Toole and James Remar.
12.30 Dylan Moran Live: Yeah, Yeah. A performance from the comedian's 2011 tour. (R) **1.25** Southland. (R) **2.10** Hollyoaks. Omnibus. (R) **4.15** Deal or No Deal. High-stakes game show, with Noel Edmonds. (R) **5.10** Countdown. (R) **5.55** SuperScrimpers.

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.15** Power Rangers: Super Samurai. (R) **10.45** ThunderCats. (R) **11.15** Inside Hollywood. **11.20** WW1's Tunnels of Death: The Big Dig. (R) **12.20 Film:** The Dam Busters. (1954) **2.55 Film:** Ben-Hur. (1959)
7.00 Cricket on 5. England v New Zealand. Highlights of day two of the concluding Test in the two-match series, which takes place at Headingley.
8.00 5 News Weekend.
8.05 NCIS. Tony and Ziva trace a suspected terrorist to a warehouse, where they find evidence suggesting a nuclear attack on Washington, DC is being planned. Drama, starring Mark Harmon. (R)
9.00 NCIS. An Iraq war veteran asks Gibbs to investigate the killing of another former marine, who was murdered while working as a lorry driver, so Ziva hits the road to catch the culprit. (R)
9.55 True Crimes: Angel of Death. When the number of deaths in an Indiana intensive care unit rapidly increases, an astute nurse helps a team of detectives to find the culprit. (R)
10.25 Law & Order: Special Victims Unit. An animal rights campaigner is found murdered.
11.20 Law & Order: Criminal Intent. A murderer with multiple personalities is on the loose. Last in the series.
12.15 SuperCasino. **4.00** Michaela's Wild Challenge. (R) **4.50** County Secrets. (R) **5.05** Hana's Helpline. (R) **5.15** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.25** The Funky Valley Show. (R) **5.35** Hana's Helpline. (R) **5.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Radio 1's Big Weekend 2013 **11.00** The Voice UK
BBC Four
7.00 Swarm: Nature's Incredible Invasions **8.00** British Masters **9.00** Arne Dahl: Many Waters – Part Two **10.30** Ultimate Number 1s at the BBC **11.30** Top of the Pops: 1978
ITV2
4.45 Film: The Incredible Hulk (2008) **7.00 Film:** Mamma Mia! (2008). Musical comedy, starring Meryl Streep. **9.10 Film:** Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason (2004) Romantic comedy sequel, with Renee Zellweger and Colin Firth. **11.20** Celebrity Juice
ITV3
2.00 Film: Agatha Christie's Murder in Three Acts (1986) **4.00** Northanger Abbey **6.00** Agatha Christie's Marple **8.00** Doc Martin **9.00** Lewis **11.00** Wire in the Blood
ITV4
3.40 20 Years of Champions League **5.40** Mourinho **6.45 Film:** Every Which Way But Loose (1978) Action comedy, starring Clint Eastwood. **9.00 Film:** Barb Wire (1996) Sci-fi thriller, starring Pamela Anderson. **11.00** Premiership Rugby Union
E4
5.30 The Mindy Project **6.00** The Big Bang Theory **7.00** Happy Endings **7.30** How I Met Your Mother **8.30** 2 Broke Girls **9.00 Film:** Daredevil (2003) Comic-book adventure, starring Ben Affleck. **11.05** The Big Bang Theory
Film4
3.00 The 7th Voyage of Sinbad (1958) **4.45** Home Alone 3 (1997) **6.40** Mission: Impossible 2 (2000) Action thriller sequel, starring Tom Cruise. **9.00** Forrest Gump (1994) Comedy drama, starring Tom Hanks. **11.40** The Crazies (2010)

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Many stories exist of the surprised delight that these experts can bring to visitors, one recently is of a retired couple who brought a box of bits and pieces to a Roadshow that had been left to them by an elderly relative, they thought that the small collection of oddments might realise perhaps £100. Imagine their surprise when they left the Roadshow having sold their "trinkets" for over £2,500!

Experiences like this are quite commonplace and this Roadshow will no doubt see similar happy events. So search through those lofts and cupboards and bring your hidden treasures to the Roadshow where Newland Antiques specialist valuers will be ready to give you an appraisal free of charge. No queuing and no appointment is necessary. Car Parking is available.

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What's On!

SUNDAY'S TV 26.05.13

Listings supplied by Press Association

CHOICE

Colin O'Donoghue

Once Upon a Time
Channel 5, 8pm
For almost half a century Barbara Hershey has been one of the most dynamic actresses working in Hollywood. She's also rather good in this saga from the Disney stable. In the latest offering, Cora (Hershey) sends her zombies to abduct Aurora (Sarah Bolger) and swap her for the enchanted compass the sorceress needs to travel to Storybrooke. Elsewhere, Snow takes the sleeping powder in the hope of warning the local residents of the danger, and Captain Hook (Colin O'Donoghue) appears to be playing a game of his own.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Battle of the Atlantic: Remembered. **12.00** The Big Questions; Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.05** Countryfile. (R) **2.00** Regional Programme. **2.30** Bargain Hunt. (R) **3.15** Points of View. **3.30** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.30** Songs of Praise. **5.05** Chelsea Flower Show 2013. **5.35** Formula 1: Monaco Grand Prix – Highlights.
7.05 BBC News; Regional News; Weather.
7.30 Countryfile. East Yorkshire is this week's location as Matt Baker finds out about marsh management on the Humber estuary and Julia Bradbury visits the Leconfield MOD School for Transport. Including Weather for the Week Ahead.
8.30 Case Histories. Jackson is asked to find out if a woman's fiance is cheating on her – only to find himself investigating a suspected murder. Marlee moves in and Deborah turns to honey-trapping.
10.00 BBC News; Regional News; Weather.
10.25 My Hero: Hugh Dennis on Ronnie Barker. Outnumbered star Hugh Dennis pays an affectionate tribute to Ronnie Barker – the star of Porridge and The Two Ronnies – following his career from the London stage to TV.
11.25 Film: The Lake House. (2006) Two strangers who exchange letters fall in love – but discover they are existing two years apart. Romantic fantasy, starring Sandra Bullock, Keanu Reeves and Christopher Plummer.
1.00 Weatherview. **1.05** BBC News.

BBC2

7.15 The A to Z of TV Gardening. **8.00** The Beechgrove Garden. **8.30** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **10.00** Live Athletics: Great Manchester Run. **12.35** EastEnders. (R) **2.25** Live Women's FA Cup Final. **5.15** Flog It! (R)
6.00 Golf: PGA Championship. Day four from Wentworth.
7.00 Racing Legends: Stirling Moss. Actor Patrick Stewart and former racing driver Stirling Moss travel to Florence in a classic Mercedes to retrace the route of Italy's most famous road race – the Mille Miglia. (R)
8.00 Porridge. Fletcher helps cellmate Godber make it through the night, calling on his limitless imagination to while away the hours. Comedy, starring Ronnie Barker and Richard Beckinsale. (R)
8.30 Ice Age Giants. Alice Roberts discovers evidence of a conflict between a cave bear and a lion in Transylvania, and examines the well-preserved remains of a female woolly rhinoceros in Siberia.
9.30 Australia with Simon Reeve. The author and adventurer continues his Australian journey with visits to Kakadu National Park, the remote northern Bush, Cape York Peninsula and the Great Barrier Reef.
10.30 Film: Cinderella Man. (2005) A washed-up boxer struggling to support his family during the Great Depression tries to launch a comeback. Drama, with Russell Crowe.
12.45 Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **1.40** Holby City. (R) **2.40** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Special Agent Oso. **6.10** Special Agent Oso. **6.25** The Hive. (R) **6.35** The Hive. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan. (R) **6.55** Dino Dan. (R) **7.05** Canimals. (R) **7.15** Canimals. (R) **7.20** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **7.30** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. **8.00** Sonny with a Chance. **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Country House Sunday. **9.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. (R) **10.20** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **11.20** ITV News; Weather. **11.30** Live French Open Tennis.
6.30 Regional Programme; Weather.
6.45 ITV News; Weather.
7.00 Celebrity Catchphrase. Kym Lomas, Steve Pemberton and Rosemary Shrager compete to identify familiar phrases hidden in animated clues to win thousands of pounds for charity.
8.00 Britain's Got Talent. Ant and Dec present the final round of auditions.
9.00 Coronation Street. Stella and Karl reopen the Rovers.
9.30 The Scapegoat. A man is persuaded to swap places with his perfect double and finds himself drawn into a new life, with disastrous consequences. Daphne du Maurier adaptation, starring Matthew Rhys. Concludes after the news. (R)
10.35 ITV News; Weather.
10.50 The Scapegoat. Conclusion of the Daphne du Maurier adaptation, starring Matthew Rhys. (R)
11.45 Premiership Rugby Union. Northampton Saints v Leicester Tigers.
12.45 The Store. **2.15** Monk. (R) **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.10 The Hoobs. (R) **6.35** The Hoobs. (R) **7.00** Xtreme Storm. **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.55** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.25** Frasier. (R) **8.55** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **1.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **1.30** The Simpsons. (R) **2.00** The Simpsons. (R) **2.30** Deal or No Deal. **3.30 Film:** Volcano. (1997) Disaster thriller, starring Tommy Lee Jones. **5.30 Film:** Tooth Fairy. (2010) Premiere. Family comedy, starring Dwayne Johnson.
7.30 Channel 4 News.
8.00 Clare Balding's Secrets of a Suffragette. The presenter investigates the death of militant activist Emily Wilding Davison in the 1913 Epsom Derby and offers a fresh perspective on what really happened that day.
9.00 Film: Another Year. (2010) Premiere. A couple approaching retirement are visited by friends and family less happy with their lives. Mike Leigh's comedy drama, starring Lesley Manville and Jim Broadbent.
11.30 Film: The Cider House Rules. (1999) A doctor's assistant living in the orphanage where he grew up sets out to see more of life, but faces difficult moral decisions. Drama, starring Tobey Maguire and Michael Caine.
1.40 Film: Murder Ahoy. (1964) Mystery, starring Margaret Rutherford. **3.20** Come Dine with Me. Four amateur chefs compete in north-west London. (R) **4.15** Deal or No Deal. Beat-the-banker game show. (R) **5.10** Countdown. With guest Jo Brand. (R) **5.55** SuperScrimpers.

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **6.15** Fifi and the Flowertots. (R) **6.25** Bert and Ernie's Great Adventures. (R) **6.30** The Mr Men Show. (R) **6.45** Chloe's Closet. **6.55** Roobarb and Custard Too. (R) **7.00** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **7.15** Animal Antics. (R) **7.20** Noddy in Toyland. (R) **7.35** Mio Mao. (R) **7.40** City of Friends. (R) **7.50** Hana's Helpline. (R) **8.00** Little Princess. (R) **8.15** The Adventures of Bottle Top Bill and His Best Friend Corky. (R) **8.25** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **8.45** Rupert Bear. (R) **9.00** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.15** Toby's Travelling Circus. (R) **9.30** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **9.45** Jelly Jamm. (R) **10.00** Power Rangers: Super Samurai. (R) **10.35** ThunderCats. (R) **11.05** How Do They Do It? (R) **11.35** The Hotel Inspector. (R) **12.30** The Hotel Inspector. (R) **1.30 Film:** Cats & Dogs. (2001) **3.10 Film:** Winnie the Pooh. (2011) **4.20 Film:** Scooby-Doo. (2002)
6.00 World's Craziest Weddings. Incidents and stunts that made people's special days even more memorable. (R)
6.55 5 News Weekend.
7.00 Cricket on 5. England v New Zealand.
8.00 Once Upon a Time. Cora sends her zombies to abduct Aurora.
9.00 Film: Drag Me to Hell. (2009) Premiere. Horror, starring Alison Lohman.
11.05 Film: My Soul to Take. (2010) Premiere. Horror, starring Max Thieriot.
1.15 SuperCasino. **4.00** Michaela's Wild Challenge. (R) **4.50** County Secrets. (R) **5.05** Hana's Helpline. (R) **5.15** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.25** The Funky Valley Show. (R) **5.35** Hana's Helpline. (R) **5.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Radio 1's Big Weekend 2013 **11.00** Russell Howard's Good News Extra **11.45** Sweat the Small Stuff: Extra Sweaty
BBC Four
7.00 The Dark Ages: An Age of Light **8.00** The Somme: Secret Tunnel Wars **9.00** Nina Conti: Talk to the Hand **10.05** Timeshift: Wrestling's Golden Age: Grapples, Grunts and Grannies **11.05** Arena: Sonny Rollins '74 – Rescued!
ITV2
3.45 You've Been Framed! **4.15 Film:** The Mummy (1999) **6.40 Film:** Back to the Future Part III (1990) Sci-fi comedy sequel, starring Michael J Fox. **9.00** Britain's Got More Talent **10.00 Film:** The Bourne Supremacy (2004) Action thriller sequel, starring Matt Damon.
ITV3
8.00 Vera. DCI Stanhope investigates a murder at a remote cottage in Northumberland. **10.00** Prime Suspect
ITV4
2.45 Live Indian Premier League Cricket. Coverage of the final at Eden Gardens, Kolkata. **8.00** Premiership Rugby Union **9.00 Film:** Kull the Conqueror (1997) **11.00** French Open Tennis Highlights
E4
4.35 Revenge **5.30** The Mindy Project **6.00** The Big Bang Theory **7.30** New Girl **8.00 Film:** X-Men (2000) **10.00** Rude Tube 2012
Film4
3.05 Honey, I Blew Up the Kid (1992) **4.50** New in Town (2009) **6.40** Green Zone Interview Special **6.50** Crocodile Dundee II (1988) **9.00** Knowing (2009) Mystery thriller, starring Nicolas Cage and Rose Byrne. **11.20** Festen (1998)

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Film Choices

MONDAY
Romancing the Stone, Channel 4, 1.05pm
A romantic novelist goes in search of her kidnapped sister in the steamy jungles of South America, only to become the target of a villainous general who demands as a ransom the valuable treasure map in her possession. Help is at hand in the form of a craggy daredevil fortune hunter. Michael Douglas stars. (1984)

Cool Runnings, BBC1, 1.55pm
A sprinter fails to qualify for the Jamaican Olympic squad, but refuses to give up his dream. Learning that a former US bobsleigh coach is living nearby, he seizes the chance to shine in an entirely different sport, and cajoles three of his friends to join him in training for the 1988 Winter Olympics in the far less tropical environment of Canada. Fact-based comedy, with John Candy. (1993)

TUESDAY
Desperado, Channel 5, 10.50pm
A mysterious musician carrying a guitar case full of firearms turns up in a small backwoods town to exact revenge on the drugs baron who killed his girlfriend and permanently injured his hand. Robert Rodriguez's action thriller, starring Antonio Banderas, Salma Hayek, Cheech Marin, Joaquim de Almeida, Steve Buscemi and Quentin Tarantino. (1995)

Cool Runnings, Monday, BBC1, 1.55pm

WEDNESDAY
Resident Evil: Extinction, Channel 5, 10pm
Zombie-fighting heroine Alice comes out of hiding to protect a group of refugees in a post-apocalyptic wasteland overrun by the walking dead. Meanwhile, the sinister corporation that created the zombie virus is about to embark on its most dangerous experiment yet. Sci-fi thriller sequel, starring Milla Jovovich. (2007)

THURSDAY
Bad Boys, Channel 5, 9pm
Detectives Mike Lowrey and Marcus Burnett search for a $100million heroin consignment brazenly stolen by a French drug kingpin from the police evidence room. However, after a mix-up over a phone call from a potential witness, each cop has to assume the other's identity. Thriller, starring Will Smith. (1995)

FRIDAY
Death Race, Channel 5, 9pm
Jensen Ames is framed for the murder of his wife and sent to Terminal Island Prison, a facility that broadcasts the highly profitable Death Race, a high-octane event where convicts battle to the death in customised cars. When a popular driver dies, crooked prison warden Hennessey persuades Ames to take his place, claiming he will be released if he is victorious. Jason Statham stars. (2008)

Pick of the Week

David proves he still has what it takes

He's the Starman, a real Space Oddity and one of our Heroes. He's also known as David Robert Jones, the Brixton boy who grew up to be one of the most influential music artists of all time.

Of course, we all know him best as David Bowie, a change of moniker forced on him by the fact that in the early days of his career, Davy Jones was making a name for himself as a member of The Monkees.

Even if you're not a fan of his music, you've got to admire the way in which Bowie has continually managed to reinvent himself, and not so much moved with the times, as stayed ahead of them.

For years he kept out of the spotlight, then surprised everybody by announcing the release of The Next Day, his first studio album for 10 years, on his 66th birthday.

He's kept quiet about it ever since, apart from revealing he will never do another interview, preferring instead to let the music do the talking; if anything, his silence has also helped to generate interest in him and his work.

The Next Day has been a massive success, with the public intrigued by what he might have been up to during his absence. And while it's a good album, even the most ardent Bowie fan would probably admit that it isn't as impressive as the offerings he gave the world during his most productive period, which lasted through the 1970s to the early 1980s.

This period continues to be seen as the most important of his career to date, and five separate years of that time are looked at in-depth in this new documentary.

Its makers have decided that 1971, 1975, 1977, 1980 and 1983 are when Bowie was at the peak of his powers, and it's hard to disagree with them.

The programme will look at Ziggy Stardust, the decision to adopt a soul sound for Young Americans, his Thin White Duke persona, time in Berlin, and the later Scary Monsters (and Super Creeps), and Let's Dance albums.

We're promised previously unseen archive footage and interviews with collaborators too.

"David Bowie is one of the most important international music stars of the past 50 years," says Jan Younghusband, the BBC's Commissioning Editor, Music & Events. "His impact on the music industry around the globe is exceptional. The never-before-seen footage in this programme will provide a fascinating insight into the world of this very private person."

Francis Whately, director, adds: "This is a project that has been in development for more than a decade, in fact since Bowie and I worked together in 2001 on a film for the BBC Omnibus strand. This year, 2013, is shaping up to be the year of David Bowie, and now is the perfect moment for this feature-length film devoted to this extraordinary artist."

Extraordinary indeed. Fifty years after he recorded his first demo, and after so many ch-ch-ch-changes to his image, Bowie is, as his song Fame states, too cool to fool.

David Bowie – Five Years, Saturday, BBC2, 9.20pm

Best of the Rest

MONDAY
Britain's Got Talent
ITV, 7.30pm
Every year this series shines the spotlight on some hilarious acts, and impressionist Philip Green is one of them. The 21-year-old comedian got a unanimous four yeses to take him through to the semi-finals. Of course it's anyone's guess who will have made it through to this stage of the finals, but as we all know, you don't need to win BGT to land a career, as Susan Boyle proved a few years ago. What we can tell you is that Ant and Dec will be in their best attire as judges Simon Cowell, Amanda Holden, Alesha Dixon and David Walliams give their verdict on the night's returning acts.

The Queen: A Passion for Horses
BBC1, 9pm
It's no secret that the Queen loves horses. She's been photographed and filmed at numerous events over the years, and even has her own racehorses. But just how hands-on is she when it comes to her equine friends? The BBC has found the perfect person to find that out – national treasure Clare Balding, whose grandfather, father and brother have all trained the Queen's horses, which gives her a unique insight into Her Majesty's stable. This documentary charts the course of one spring season, from the births of foals at Sandringham to the thrill of race day at Newbury. Princess Anne and Zara Phillips, who are following in her footsteps (or should that be hoofsteps?), also discuss their esteemed relative's dedication to her four-legged friends.

TUESDAY
The Apprentice
BBC1, 9pm
Our economy might be struggling following a series of recessions, however one rule of business is thus: go where the money is. That's exactly what the candidates do this week, as they're bundled onto an early morning plane for a business trip to Dubai. It's in the oil-rich Emirate city that this series' scavenger hunt takes place, as the teams are challenged to track down items for a hotel. While one team hopes to capitalise on a bit of local expertise by scouring the markets, another heads straight to a shopping centre.

WEDNESDAY
The Iraq War
BBC2, 9pm
Without doubt the most contentious decisions made by Tony Blair and George W Bush during their time in office were in regard to the war in Iraq. For the first time, key decision-makers on both sides of the conflict, including Tony Blair and members of Saddam's regime discuss their roles... and their regrets. The first of three episodes concentrates on the build-up to the war, as the politicians involved recall the circumstances that made conflict inevitable, and attempt to refute some of the myths and speculation that have come to surround a war that is doomed to be forever shrouded in controversy.

Britain's Got Talent, Monday, ITV, 7.30pm

Frankie
BBC1, 9pm
Frankie is determined to get her life in order, beginning with her home. She gives it a fresh lick of paint, changes the locks and throws away the last of Ian's stuff. However, just when one section of her life appears to be nearing some form of normality, her work life hits a crisis as the circumstances of Liana Corden's death begin to be investigated meaning she needs her team's support more than ever, but this doesn't materialise from Dr Evans who continues to try and bring her down, using another patient as ammunition.

THURSDAY
Die Hard: The True Story
Channel 5, 7pm
In 1988, action thriller Die Hard became one of the biggest hits of the year. It helped transform Bruce Willis from charming TV regular into an A-list movie star, and created a template which has been slavishly adhered to ever since in films such as Under Siege, and more recently, the dreadful White House-centric Olympus Has Fallen. It spawned four sequels, including the hi-tech, rather enjoyable Die Hard 4.0, which saw John McClane joining forces with a technological whiz-kid who tackled a warped IT expert trying to bring down America's computer systems. This show examines how likely large-scale cyber terrorism is.

Britain's Stone Age Tsunami
Channel 4, 8pm
It might upset some to know this, but 8000 years ago Britain was literally attached to the continent by a land mass the size of Germany. In 6000BC Doggerland was washed into the sea by a raging tsunami. What remains is a shallow area of the North Sea now known as Dogger Bank. Using modern digital technology, Tony Robinson and a team of archaeologists are able to take a virtual journey through this vanished landscape.

FRIDAY
Sarah Millican: Thoroughly Modern Millican Live
Channel 4, 9pm
Sarah Millican left many critics rolling in the aisles when she seized victory at the Edinburgh Fringe a few years ago. She soon gave Micky Flanagan a run for his money as one of UK TV's most ubiquitous guests, so there was little surprise when Beeb bosses finally gave Ms M her own show. If you shelled out a tenner or more for the DVD of her stand-up performance at London's Hammersmith Apollo during her 2012 UK tour, then you may want to give this free version a wide berth. Everyone else: settle back and enjoy as the omnipresent funnywoman reflects on the wonders of making a home-made treadmill, the reasons for carrying spare pants and the practicalities of an orgy.

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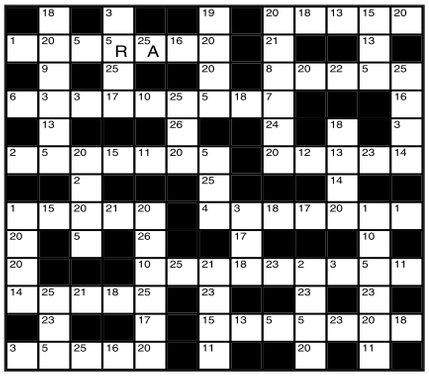
Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



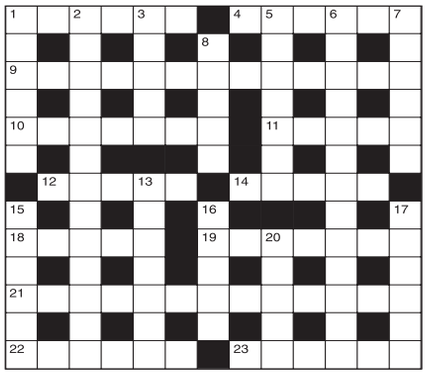
1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5 R	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25 A
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
V	Q	A	O	R	W	E	P	M	N	I	X	K
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
D	L	C	Y	S	B	U	T	Z	H	J	G	F

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. Make an impression? (6)
4. He knows where to draw the line (6)
9. With which one suffers a lack of balance (4,9)
10. Take action to stop weakening the spirit? (3,4)
11. Make a change in special terms (5)
12. Soundly ridiculed a conductor (5)
14. Belief one can always go back on? (5)
18. Bring up the question of more pay? (5)
19. Hoping to benefit from a reduction in the fare (2,1,4)
21. As a matador may be? (7,2,4)
22. An odd desire to live (6)
23. His parents will be late (6)

Down

1. Do some relief work? (6)
2. Suspicious affair the comedian is involved in? (5,8)
3. Fate embraced by small church cleric (5)
5. A sign of confusion (3,4)
6. At home finally, seeking a place (2,2,3,6)
7. Private coaches? (6)
8. Period of youth which may be tense (5)
13. In line with the drill sergeant's instructions (7)
15. He wants a good deal (6)
16. Tied up money? (5)
17. Taken unawares? (6)
20. The morning belongs to us for an intrigue (5)

Quick Clues:

Across

1. Mend (6)
4. Mission (6)
9. In order of time (13)
10. Ruler (7)
11. Extremity (5)
12. Range (5)
14. Brush (5)
18. Suffer (5)
19. Glowing (7)
21. Articulation (13)
22. Hark! (6)
23. Drive home (6)

Down

1. Affluence (6)
2. Clear-sighted (13)
3. Interior (5)
5. Normal (7)
6. Lodgings (13)
7. Water down (6)
8. Kudos (5)
13. Scent (7)
15. Scatter (6)
16. Pamphlet (5)
17. Offensive odour (6)
20. Slow speech (5)

Sudoku

		2		3	8	6		
	8						2	9
7		6		4			1	
9		4		8				
	7		5		2		4	
					1	8		7
	6			1		5		3
	3	1					9	4
		9	3	7				

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

5	3	8	9	7	2	1	4	6
2	4	9	6	3	1	5	7	8
1	7	6	4	8	5	2	3	9
6	8	4	5	2	9	7	1	3
7	9	5	3	1	4	6	8	2
3	2	1	7	6	8	4	9	5
8	5	7	2	4	3	9	6	1
4	1	2	8	9	6	3	5	7
9	6	3	1	5	7	8	2	4

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Floodlit game; 7 Steep; 8 Noose; 9 Tea; 10 Turquoise; 11 Exempt; 12 In debt; 15 Two-seater; 17 Hie; 18 Rotor; 19 Heels; 21 Poltergeists. Down: 1 From the start; 2 Die; 3 Import; 4 Gun-runner; 5 Maori; 6 Nevertheless; 7 Spare; 10 Top secret; 13 Ethos; 14 Etcher; 16 Outdo; 20 Eve. QUICK - Across: 1 Reminiscence; 7 Drear; 8 Incur; 9 Eve; 10 Sacrilege; 11 Assent; 12 Tariff; 15 Elucidate; 17 Ash; 18 Rouse; 19 Abuse; 21 Clothes-horse. Down: 1 Rio-de-Janeiro; 2 Nee; 3 Strict; 4 Eliminate; 5 Cache; 6 Free of charge; 7 Dregs; 10 Sentiment; 13 Inane; 14 Vacate; 16 Usual; 20 Ugh.

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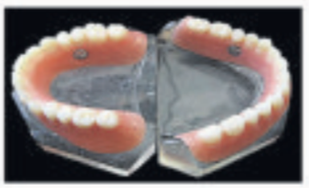

The Ultra Suction system is available for both top and lower dentures

The Ultra Suction system is available for both new prescriptions and reline dentures

Transformations

Making the transformation and providing a cost-effective solution for upper and lower denture stability, the Ultra Suction prosthetics use a clever diaphram system to help provide wearers with greater dental security

Suction another solution

A CUTTING-EDGE development to help resolve the stability problems faced by thousands of denture wearers is being offered by the Denture Clinic.

Denturist Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS(Eng), who heads the teams at his North Street practice in Dudley and other clinics in Wolverhampton and Bearwood, says the invention has the potential to resolve issues with the poor stabilisation of dentures.

Prosthetics are held in place by tiny valve-operated suction devices which are built into the prescription. A clever diaphrams principle, triggered by the bite pressure on patients' gums, creates a 'sucking' vacuum between the soft-tissue mouth lining and the prosthetic.

Mr Burchell, whose clinics attracts patients from as far as Spain, the Isle of Skye and the Isle of Anglesey, adds: "The denture revolution is evolving at a pace. In recent times we have seen what I can describe only as strident steps forward with implant-retained dentures coming into main-stream dentistry, clever technology which allows excellent fitting outcomes and now the Ultra Suction product.

"Implant dentistry is not suitable for everyone, neither is it all patients' first preference.

'Toolbox'

"The beauty of this technology is that it can offer for the right patient excellent denture retainer qualities without the complex clinical procedures required for implant work.

"We have always endeavoured to be on the very cusp of clinical development and this is another tool in our commitment to always try to deliver results which are greater than patient expectations."

Historically, lower dentures can present stability problems as the jaw bone erodes with age. With traditional dentures this can cause lower teeth to move and create painful friction problems on gums.

Mr Burchell adds: "The device can be mounted on upper or lower palates and because of its efficiency allows us to consider a reduction in the size of the acrylic 'plate' which can result in improved speech and taste.

"The Ultra Suction kit increases the options in our clinical 'toolbox' and can provide affordable solutions to many patients who would not wish to pursue the stability resolve with implants.

"I remain passionate about the transformations good prosthetics can achieve."

Typically, patients will be encouraged to contribute their views to treatment plans and generally be assigned more than three-and-a-half clinical hours in achieving the best possible outcome.

Betty is free from pain after having implants

A WOMAN who had suffered years of pain with two jaw conditions has finally found relief after undergoing dental implant surgery.

Betty had worn dentures for many years but developed neuralgia and her trigeminal nerve had become inflamed.

"I had terrible jaw pain and suffered pins and needles in the side of my head and tongue. It's a terrible condition. I'd had an MRI scan and had seen a specialist, but was still without relief," she says.

Clinical dental technician Mr Burchell had made dentures for Betty seven years ago and she returned to his clinic to inquire about a new prescription because the lower denture had lost its stability.

"I had put up with the floating effect of my lower denture and needed to address the problem. My lower gum had receded so much my denture was pressing down on a nerve and causing me pain," she adds.

"Steven explained the benefits of implant-retained dentures and told me it would allow my bite to be opened some more. Since having the implants on my lower denture, I have experienced no more pain."

Mr Burchell said all dentures have a shelf life and Betty's denture problem was due to shrinkage of her gums – a naturally occurring aging process.

"We hoped for an improved outcome on her condition, but never dreamed that the final clinical result could be so rewarding with Betty being free from pain," he adds.

The Denture Clinic is at 82 Tettenhall Road, Wolverhampton, WV1 4TF. Don't suffer any longer – call 01902 539300 for a free consultation
We can also be found at the Fresh Dental practice, 4 St Mary's Road, Bearwood, Birmingham, B67 5DG. Call 01384 348594 to book an appointment

Property

House has a large garden

Edwards Moore is handling the sale of this traditional detached in Broadway North, Walsall, based on offers around £315,000. Call 01922 615222

A TRADITIONAL style etached home in Walsall is for sale, based on offers around £315,000.

Extended on the ground floor, the property in Broadway North benefits from gas-fired central heating, uPVC double glazing and well-planned, spacious living accommodation.

On the ground floor the rear lounge – 16ft 3in by 15ft 1in – has a feature brick fireplace with quarry tiled hearth and wooden mantle with inset living flame gas fire and French doors to the rear garden. A separate dining room, measuring 11ft 10in by 10ft 7in, has feature fireplace and electric fire.

Bedrooms

The breakfast kitchen – 16ft 4in by 9ft 6in – has an inset sink unit with drainer and mixer tap, wall and base units, halogen hob and electric oven and there is a reception/ play room which is 13ft 10in by 9ft 4in.

On the first floor are three bedrooms and a bathroom with white suite of corner bath with shower over, WC and vanity unit.

There is a garage with plumbing for automatic washing machine and access to a toilet and wash hand basin. To the front the property is set back from the road behind a block paved driveway with ample off-road parking flanked by a lawned garden, and to the rear the garden has a raised patio, lawned area, mature trees and shrubs.

Contact Edwards Moore on 01922 615222.

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PROPERTY AUCTION - 18th JUNE 2013

Nos 183, 185 & 187 GOLDTHORN HILL, WOLVERHAMPTON
Terrace of three spacious houses, three bedrooms, two receptions, cellars, garages and gardens - for modernisation - to be offered as one Lot
Guide: £230,000/£240,000
VIEWING - FRIDAY 24TH MAY @ 11.15 am
(torch needed - please bring your own)

Nos 14A-14D, UPPER LICHFIELD ST., WILLENHALL
In the heart of the town, four recently built Apartments all now let on AST's - advised currently producing £19,800 p.a.x.,
Guide £150,000/£170,000
VIEWING - FRIDAY 24TH MAY @ 9.30 am

130 WOOD ROAD, CODSALL
Modern Ground Floor Apartment (in block of four), lovely outlook towards open fields, hall, lounge, fitted kitchen, double bedroom, white bathroom, garage - Leasehold, 105 years remaining.
Guide: £68,000/£73,000
VIEWING - FRIDAY 24TH MAY @ 1.15 pm

125 JEFFCOCK ROAD, WOLVERHAMPTON
Large Victorian Detached, Gas CH, hall, two reception, breakfast room, kitchen, three bedrooms, white bathroom, large outside store, garden.
Guide: £90,000/£100,000
VIEWING: FRIDAY 24th MAY @ 12.00 NOON

163 LINTHOUSE LANE, WEDNESFIELD
Looking out towards open fields, modern Detached, extended accommodation, two large reception, kitchen, two double bedrooms, bathroom, car port and large BUILDING PLOT with Planning Permission.
Guide: £163,000/£168,000
VIEWING: FRIDAY 24th MAY @ 9.45 am

3 CURZON STREET, BLAKENHALL
Spacious Mid Terraced in popular district, full refurb needed, two reception, kitchen and bathroom areas, three bedrooms, wash room, long rear garden.
Guide: £57,000/£62,000
VIEWING - FRIDAY 24TH MAY @ 10.30 am
(torch needed - please bring your own)

25 ASHLEY STREET, BILSTON
Mid Terraced, open outlook, big accommodation, Gas CH, two reception, kitchen wc, three bedrooms, huge bathroom, gardens.
Guide: £54,000/£59,000
VIEWING: FRIDAY 24th MAY @ 10.30 am

NEWHAMPTON ROAD WEST, WOLVERHAMPTON - BUILDING LAND (adjacent to No 56)
With Planning Permission for Terrace of three two bed houses, vehicular access and parking.
Guide: £73,000/£78,000

5 SUMMERFIELD ROAD, WEST PARK
Close to Park, Period Semi, offering dignified accommodation, two large reception, breakfast room, kitchen, cellar, fine landing, five bedrooms, boxroom, bathroom, attractive garden, stores, garage and vehicular access at rear.
Guide: £170,000/£180,000
VIEWING: FRIDAY 24th MAY @ 1.00 pm

1 CODSALL ROAD, TETTENHALL
Well located modernised Detached with smart interior, Gas CH, upvc windows, two reception, three bedrooms, modern kitchen and bathroom, garage, gardens.
Guide: £175,000/£180,000
VIEWING: FRIDAY 24th MAY @ 12.30 pm

18 WINDSOR ROAD, PARKFIELDS, WOLVERHAMPTON
Conveniently located, smartly presented and spacious Detached residence with double glazing and Gas CH, fitted cloaks, two reception, large kitchen, laundry, three bedrooms, bathroom, off-road parking.
Guide: £60,000/£65,000
VIEWING: FRIDAY 24th MAY @ 11.15 am

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Property

Home on 1.2 acre plot

A DETACHED house in beautifully kept gardens of around 1.2 acres in Selmans Hill, Bloxwich, is on the market based on offers in the region of £349,950.

The property, built to the highest specifications by local builders Wootton on behalf of the Wilkes family of Bloxwich, has an in-and-out driveway.

The centrally heated and double glazed accommodation briefly comprising of enclosed storm porch, oak panelled entrance hall/stairs, guest cloaks/WC, through lounge with inglenook fireplace, separate formal dining breakfast room with archway to kitchen and conservatory, utility area, bedroom four (potential granny annexe), master bedroom with built-in bedroom furniture, two bedrooms, bathroom and separate WC

On the ground floor the cloaks/WC has a toilet and wash hand basin while the through lounge – 17ft 8in by 11ft 6in – has a feature inglenook fireplace with mahogany fire surround, raised marble hearth and inset flame-effect gas fire and door to rear patio.

The dining room, 11ft 11in by 12ft 6in, has an ornate fireplace with raised marble hearth and real flame effect gas fire while the breakfast room measuring 12ft 8in by 9ft 5in has a timber fire surround, raised tile hearth and gas fire with base and wall units and doors to the conservatory, 11ft 10in by 10ft 10in.

Two feature archways from the breakfast room give access to the kitchen, 13ft 8in by 8ft 6in, with a range of base and wall units, roll-top work surfaces, one-and-a-half bowl stainless steel sink drainer with mixer tap, four-ring gas hob with extractor over, built-in electric oven, dishwasher, integrated larder fridge and door to utility with plumbing for automatic washing machine and tumble dryer.

There is also bedroom four, 33ft 2in by 9ft, which could be used for a variety of things.

On the first floor are three bedrooms and a bathroom with corner spa bath, pedestal wash hand basin and shower cubicle, and there is a separate WC.

Outside the property stands in manicured lawns with the block paved in and out driveway providing ample car parking. There is also a wide pedestrian gated entrance with access to a large block paved patio with brick built garden store and WC, as well as mature trees, laurel hedging and ornamental garden pond.

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DURHAM ROAD

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WILLENHALL
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- Traditionnal style spacious mid terraced
- Three bedrooms
- Gas c/heating
- Double glazed
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- Energy Rating 'D'

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FOR SALE

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FOR SALE

MILL LANE, WILLENHALL

Spacious Four Bed Detached Bungalow Having Entrance Hallway, Conservatory, Fitted Kitchen, Utility, Four Double Bedrooms, Family Bathroom, Guest Cloakroom, Garage, D/Glazing, C/Heating & Large Driveway •No Chain•

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FOR SALE

ST CHADS ROAD, BILSTON

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FOR SALE

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FOR SALE

WINDSOR WALK, DARLASTON

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£83,995

FOR SALE

VICTORIA ST, WILLENHALL

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Bloxwich
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- Garage & Off Road Parking●Gardens

Offers in excess of £175,000

Bloxwich
Wolverhampton Road
- Four Bedroom Detached
- Large Lounge●Breakfast Kitchen
- Dining Room●Rear Lobby/Utility
- Family Bathroom with Walk-In Shower
- Gardens●Integral Garage & Driveway

Offers in excess of £166,000

Willenhall
Longwood Rise
- Four Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Lounge●Kitchen/Diner
- Family Bathroom●Gardens
- D.Glazing & Gas Central Heating
- Driveway & off Road Parking●Garage

£159,950

Bloxwich
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- Extended Three Bedroom Detached
- Two Reception Rooms●Breakfast Room
- Kitchen with Pantry/Larder
- Study●Bathroom●Gardens
- Garage & Ample Off Road Parking

In the Region of £149,950

Walsall
Leamore Lane
- Three Bedroom Town House
- Kitchen/Diner●Study●Cloakroom W.C.
- First Floor Lounge●Family Bathroom
- En-Suite Shower Room●Gardens
- Detached Garage

In the Region of £145,000

Walsall
Bloxwich Road
- Four Bedroom Detached
- Lounge/ Study●Dining Room
- Kitchen/ Utility●Family Bathroom
- Double Glazing & Gas Central Heating
- Gardens●Car Port with Off Road

Offers in excess of £140,000

Willenhall
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- Two Bed Semi-Detached Bungalow
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- Bathroom●Front & Rear Gardens
- Double Glazing & Central Heating
- Front Driveway with Off Road Parking

In the Region of £139,995

Walsall
Tenbury Close
- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Fitted Kitchen●Lounge●Shower Room
- Double Glazing & Gas Central Heating
- Rear Landscaped Garden
- Front Garden & Off Road Parking

£137,500

Walsall
Harness Close
- Three Bedroom Link-Detached
- Lounge●Kitchen Diner
- Family Bathroom
- Front & Rear Gardens
- Garage & Driveway●NO CHAIN

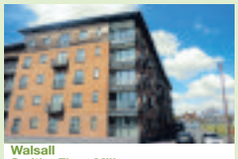
Offers in excess of £135,000

Bloxwich
Harrison Street
- Victorian Three Bed End-Terrace
- Two Reception Rooms●Bathroom
- Fitted Kitchen●Utility●Cellar
- Guest W.C.
- Front & Rear Gardens

Offers in excess of £130,000

Willenhall
Gurnard Close
- Two Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Lounge●Fitted Breakfast Kitchen
- Re-Fitted Family Bathroom
- Gardens●Ample Off Road Parking
- Double Glazing & Gas Central Heating

In the Region of £129,950



Walsall
Smiths Flour Mill
- Two Bedroom Apartment
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- Electric Heating & Double Glazing
- Family Bathroom
- Allocated Parking

Offers in excess of £125,000

Willenhall
Balmoral Drive
- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Through Lounge/Dining Room
- Fitted Kitchen
- Family Bathroom
- Garage & Off Road Parking

In the Region of £125,000

Rushall
Rough Brook Road
- Two Bedroom Mid-Terrace
- Fitted Kitchen●Lounge/Dining Roomr
- Guest W.C.●Family Bathroom
- Enclosed Rear Garden●Off Road Parking

£124,995

Walsall
Wolverhampton Street
- Two Bedroom First Floor Apartment
- Open Living Area●Family Bathroom
- Kitchen with Integrated Appliances
- Double Glazing & Electric Heating
- Secure Allocated Parking

Offers in excess of £120,000

Walsall
Raymond Close
- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Lounge/Dining Room
- Extended Kitchen●Family Bathroom
- Separate W.C.●Garage●Driveway
- Double Glazing & Gas Central Heating

£112,500

Willenhall
Squires Grove
- Two Bedroom Coach House Apartment
- Large Lounge/Dining Room
- Fitted Kitchen with Breakfast Bar
- Converted Garage●Allocated Parking
- D.Glazing & Gas Central Heating

In the Region of £110,500

Bloxwich
Harden Road
- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Lounge●Kitchen/Diner●Guest W.C.
- Newly Fitted Bathroom with
- D.Glazing & Gas Central Heating
- Front & Rear Gardens●NO CHAIN

In the Region of £104,950

Rushall
Stanier Close
- Ideal for First Time Buyer
- Two Bedroom Mid-Terrace
- Fitted Kitchen●Lounge/Diner
- Bathroom●D.Glazing& Electric Heating
- Gardens●Allocated Parking Spaces

£99,950

Walsall
Wolverhampton Road
- Three Bedroom Mid-Terrace
- Two Reception Rooms●Lean To
- Kitchen●Ground Floor Bathroom
- Double Glazing & Gas Central Heating
- Front & Rear Gardens

In the Region of £97,500

Walsall
Bloxwich Lane
- Three Bedroom Mid-Terrace
- Lounge●Though Kitchen/Diner
- Rear Extension●Bathroom●Garden
- Block Paved Driveway to the Front
- Double Glazing & Gas Central Heating

In the Region of £95,000

Bloxwich
Margam Crescent
- Three Bedroom Terrace
- Lounge●Kitchen/Diner with Patio Doors
- Family Bathroom shower over bath
- Front & Rear Gardens●Central Heating
- Double Glazing including Patio Doors

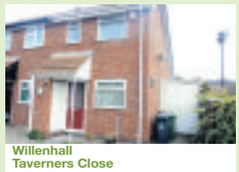
In the Region of £95,000

Bloxwich
Harrison Street
- Two Bedroom Mid-Terrace
- Two Reception Rooms
- Fitted Kitchen●Ground Floor Bathroom
- Double Glazing & Gas Central Heating
- Cellar●Front & Rear Gardens

Offers in excess of £90,000

Bloxwich
Mossley Lane
- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Two Reception Rooms●Kitchen
- Rear Porch●Bathroom
- Separate W.C.●Off Road Parking
- Large Corner plot with Garage

In the Region of £89,950



Willenhall
Taverners Close
- One Bedroom House
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- Dining/Sun Room●Double Bedroom
- Bathroom with Shower●Enclosed Rear Garden

In the Region of £87,950

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- Kitchen●Family Bathroom
- Double Glazed●Central Heating
- Rear Garden●Off Road Parking

In the Region of £84,950

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A three bedroom semi detached home situated on an exceptional corner plot on the prestigious "Manor" development.

Walsall Street, Wednesbury

£140,000

A recently refurbished two bedroom detached bungalow situated on a sought after road overlooking Brunswick Park in Wednesbury.

Vaughan Road, Willenhall

£135,000

Extended three bedroom semi detached home. Benefitting from a refurbishment project allowing for underfloor heating and a hand crafted staircase.

Wrighton Close, Willenhall

£135,000

Extended three bedroom semi detached home situated in a cul-de-sac location in New Invention.

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Motoring

Compiled by Motoring Editor Sharon Walters

Ticks all the boxes when off-road

By Sharon Walters

I HAVE a friend who does a lot of off-roading, including some pretty tough driving challenges. And this female has a fair income to fund her hobby, so she can afford pretty much whatever she wants to drive.

Her choice? A cheap and cheerful Suzuki Jimny.

"It's compact which means I can get just about anywhere I want to squeeze, it's chunky and copes with the bumps and grinds, and because it hasn't cost me the earth I won't wince if I do any damage," she explained.

So when I got the latest Jimny on test, I took her out for a bit of a spin – well not quite literally. A quick trip to her home to pick her up proved the other thing she told me, it's not that hot on roads and is a bit basic. Well they do say you get what you pay for. On the other hand, she added, because it is small you can park it in some very tight places if you pop into town to do some shopping.

And so off we trundled across the fields at her home. Some fair slopes, a lot of mud and tyres that were not specifically for off-road, proved to me just what the car can do. For a car so small it copes magnificently with bumps although on the road the ride can be a little tough. We had a great deal of fun and Jenny is now upgrading her old Jimny.

The Suzuki Jimny, a budget-priced off-roader, gets to work in difficult conditions

Jimny has a neat and practical look and since sales began in 1998, it has accumulated a loyal following of repeat customers who enjoy a quirky alternative to a supermini or crossover SUV.

The 1.3 litre engine may appear small but it gives lively performance and decent fuel economy. Maximum torque is delivered from as low as 2,500rpm, which Jimny the kind of flexible driving character and pulling power that makes it so good off road. The seats give good support, especially needed for those driving challenges.

There's a good level of standard equipment across two trim levels: SZ3 and SZ4.

The entry level SZ3 models include; front fog lamps, roof rails, remote central locking, ABS with EBD, push button selectable four-wheel drive with high and low ratios and automatic freewheeling hubs. SZ4 models add even more specification as standard including air conditioning; 10 spoke 15in alloy wheels, latest design seat trim with 'Jimny' badging to front seat facings, black and silver-finish roof rails, leather steering wheel trim, chrome plated interior door handles and rear privacy glass.

The driving position is high and commands an excellent all-round view. All on board enjoy plenty of headroom, increasing the sense of spaciousness created by the large glass area. Rearward visibility is aided by large, electrically operated door mirrors and a spare wheel mounted low on the rear door.

Toughness

Since its launch in 1998, Jimny's separate, full box-section chassis has established a strong reputation for durability and toughness.

The rigid front and rear axles are attached to the chassis by a three-link arrangement, with an anti-roll bar fitted at the front. This well-proven design, controlled by long-travel coil springs and gas dampers, is configured to cope with the demands of rough surfaces, while ensuring a refined and compliant ride on conventional roads.

Suzuki's Drive Select 4x4 system features a transfer box with high or low-ratio four-wheel drive. The freewheeling front hubs are engaged automatically and four-wheel drive can be selected on the move while travelling in a straight line at speeds of up to 62 mph.

Jimny is fundamentally designed to cope with off-road conditions with 190mm ground clearance, approach and departure angles of 34° and 46° respectively and a ramp angle of 31°.

Jimny's chassis offers extreme rigidity in the event of a collision and is designed to absorb energy from all directions in a controlled manner. Progressive, reassuring braking performance is provided by large front discs and rear drums, supported by ABS with EBD (Electronic Brakeforce Distribution).

Airbags for driver and front passenger, side impact protection beams and height adjustable front seat belt anchorages are all standard, and the powerful multi-reflector halogen headlamps are complemented by the front bumper-mounted fog lamps.

A wide range of Suzuki genuine accessories are available. I have the perfect buyer for one of these. Aside from keen off-roaders, those who live in the country need a standby car with four-wheel capability to cope with the ever more difficult winter (and summer) weather we are getting, with flooded roads and snow and ice on the increase, and one that doesn't cost a lot of money.

Bumper to bumper

Suzuki Jimny
Engine: 1.3-litre four-cylinder 85bhp
Performance: Top speed 87mph
Economy: 39.8mpg (combined cycle)
Insurance group: 15D
Price: From £11,295

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Models shown: Alto 1.0 SZ4 available at £7,999 on the road, includes customer saving of £1,600 (metallic paint available at £399). Splash 1.2 SZ4 available at £9,899 on the road, includes customer saving of £1,980 (metallic paint available at £415). Swift 1.2 SZ4 5dr available at £11,415 on the road, includes customer saving of £2,284 (metallic paint available at £430). Alto, Splash and Swift range official fuel consumption figures in mpg (L/100km): Urban from 40.9 (6.9) to 55.4 (5.1), extra urban from 56.5 (5.0) to 78.5 (3.6), combined from 49.6 (5.7) to 67.3 (4.2). Official CO_2 emissions from 131 g/km to 109 g/km.

*VAT free offer on Alto, Splash and Swift range: Alto 1.0 SZ available from £5,999, including customer saving of £1,200 to Alto 1.0 SZ4 A/T available at £8,625 including customer saving of £1,724 equivalent to VAT amount of previous on the road price of £7,199 (SZ) and £10,349 (SZ4 A/T). Splash 1.0 SZ2 available at £7,999, including customer saving of £1,600 to Splash 1.2 SZ4 A/T available at £10,645 including a customer saving of £2,129 equivalent to VAT amount of previous on the road price of £9,599 (SZ2) and £12,774 (SZ4 A/T). Swift 1.2 SZ2 3dr available at £8,999, including a customer saving of £1,800 to Swift 1.2 SZ4 5dr A/T available at £12,257 including customer saving of £2,452 equivalent to VAT amount of previous on the road price of £10,799 (SZ2 3dr) and £14,709 (SZ4 5dr A/T). VAT Free offer excludes Swift Sport, Swift Sport SZ-R and Swift Attitude. For full details contact your local participating Suzuki Dealer. Offer subject to availability for vehicles privately registered between 1st April 2013 and 30th June 2013 from participating Authorised Suzuki Dealers only. Offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offers. All prices and specifications correct at time of going to print

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Motoring

The new-look Skoda Superb will be available with six engine options, three petrol and three diesel

Summer launch in UK for the flagship Skoda range

ŠKODA has revealed UK price and specification details for its updated Superb flagship model.

Having undergone a comprehensive facelift, both hatch and estate versions offer a fresh and attractive design, an upgraded interior and significantly improved fuel economy and CO2 emissions. On sale in the UK from July 17, prices for the facelift Superb range start at just £18,555 (OTR) for the 1.4-litre TSI 125PS S hatch. The top-of-the-range Laurin & Klement Estate model costs £32,455 (OTR) when paired with the 2.0 TDI CR 170PS DFP engine, 4x4 and 6spd Direct Shift Gearbox (DSG). Diesel versions start from £19,760 (OTR). The premium for the estate over its hatch sibling is £1,125.

The Superb facelift will be available in the UK with six advanced engine options: three petrol and three diesel. Power outputs range from 105PS (1.6 TDI CR) to 260PS for the 3.6 V6 model.

Engines are up to 19 per cent more economical than the previous generation units, and a fuel-efficient GreenLine version offers emissions of only 109g/km.

The fleet sector will make a significant contribution to Superb sales, and with BiK starting at just 16 per cent, and more rear legroom than most prestige cars, the Superb's appeal is obvious.

Alasdair Stewart, Brand Director for ŠKODA UK, said: "The Superb continues ŠKODA's tradition of offering a huge amount of space, engineering excellence and great value for money.

"Since its launch 12-years-ago, the Superb has been lauded for its versatility, comfort and equipment.

"This comprehensive facelift builds on these and we are confident that the excellent improvements to fuel consumption and CO2 will appeal to both fleet and private customers."

The Kia cee'd Sportswagon beat off strong opposition in the Diesel Car magazine awards

Best Estate Car award for Kia cee'd Sportswagon

DIESEL Car magazine has named the Kia cee'd Sportswagon Best Estate Car in its annual Car of the Year issue – the first award won by Kia's C-segment car.

Beating off strong opposition from the Mazda 6 Tourer and Jaguar XF Sportbrake to win the overall title, Diesel Car magazine's editor, Ian Robertson said: "The cee'd Sportswagon combines well-designed practicality and excellent driving calibre in an attractive package."

Kia had a strong showing in the Diesel Car magazine awards, with the Sorento highly commended in the mainstream 4x4 class, whilst the Rio was also commended in the mainstream small car class. Celebrating their 25th anniversary in the business this year, Diesel Car is the UK's top selling diesel, alternative fuel and eco-friendly car specialist monthly magazine.

Paul Philpott, president and CEO, Kia Motors UK Limited said: "We are delighted that Diesel Car has awarded the cee'd Sportswagon best estate car for 2013. It's unrivalled combination of space, functionality and engine performance, wrapped up in a premium design and backed up with our seven-year warranty, gave us great confidence that we had a best-in-class product. Thankfully Diesel Car agree!"

Built and launched in Slovakia in September 2012, the second generation cee'd Sportswagon is available with two engine options – 1.4-litre 89bhp and 1.6-litre CRDi 126bhp, with prices starting from £16,895 on the road. Kia's fixed-priced and inflation proof "Care-3" and "Care-3 plus" servicing packages, which covers the first three or first five services for retail customers, are available for £329, or £609 accordingly. For more information on cee'd Sportswagon, please visit www.kia.co.uk

Since registrations of the new generation cee'd family begun in May 2012, the cee'd Sportswagon currently makes up 16 per cent of the total cee'd family sales, this being split between 75 per cent fleet, and 25 per cent retail sales in the UK.

Second generation electric car is a winner

Nissan turns over a new Leaf in the world of electric motors

Nissan have used input from existing customers in designing the new Leaf electric model

By Matt Kimberley

NISSAN is on a bit of a roll. While some manufacturers are still working on their first electric cars, Nissan is rolling out the second generation Leaf, with less weight, more range and a design more closely tailored to real-world demands.

The biggest input into the new car has come from existing customers, which explains why it looks so similar to the old one. Nissan says the Leaf gets the highest customer satisfaction scores of any car it makes – as much as 93% – and the people who own ageing models apparently want to stay loyal to it.

But there were some obvious things wrong with the old car. The pale interior came in for a lot of criticism, so European versions of the Leaf II have switched to black, which includes black leather on the top-spec model.

The single old trim option has expanded to the triumvirate of Visia, Acenta and Tekna, making the Leaf more affordable at one end and better equipped at the other.

Combined with the choice of whether to buy the entire car outright or to save £5,000 and lease the batteries, the headline price now starts from under £16,000 after the £5,000 Government grant. Suddenly the Leaf seems a lot more affordable.

The boot is now bigger; at 370 litres it's technically just 10 litres short of those of the new Volkswagen Golf and Seat Leon, although it's not so conveniently shaped.

The curved corners and relatively intrusive wheel arches make an irregularly shaped load space. Still, a 40-litre boost over the old model thanks to some relocated technology means space for one extra suitcase.

This time Nissan has given the European car its own suspension tune. The overly soft, sometimes wobbly ride of the old car was a cause for complaint.

The new set-up is not firmer per se, but is damped with greater conviction to reduce pitch and bounce. It works, too, controlling the Leaf's body movement better than before while retaining the surprisingly good ride quality that defined the first Leaf.

Confidence

It absorbs bumps and potholes with confidence, composure and impressively quietly. Uncommonly so, in fact, compared to almost any rival. The drivetrain is as quiet and vibration-free as you might expect, and the lack of vibration vastly reduces driver fatigue and irritation behind the wheel.

Driving the new Leaf is thoroughly relaxing, with thoughtfully shaped seats that support your spine well. The padding offers a good balance of soft comfort and measured support and the variable-ratio steering is pleasant at all speeds, but it does give something away in terms of initial turn-in response and there's no reach adjustment for the wheel.

The batteries now offer a potential 120 miles or more in ideal conditions from a full charge. A real-world 100 miles should be normal in the summer months. Part of this increase comes from a weight reduction of 32kg, chopped mainly out of two key drivetrain components.

That drivetrain has been modified with new torque mapping and an extra driving mode, labelled B. It increases the 'engine braking' effect to closer replicate being in a low gear in an internal combustion-engined car, increasing the amount of energy the car recuperates in the process.

It's brilliant for hilly routes, where the energy recuperated can be almost as much as the energy you use.

The top-spec Tekna model driven here really feels like a luxurious car, with heated seats even in the back, leather upholstery, climate control, an extensive in-car systems readout and satnav. The only notable flaws are the shiny plastic surrounds for the switches on the door panels.

And yet the price is very reasonable when compared to other top-spec cars. You're getting a very advanced thing, with the capacity to recoup 80 per cent of its full charge in 30 minutes and to cost you less than £2 for every 100 miles you drive. While niggles like the thick, awkwardly positioned A-pillars do merit caution, the overall impression is hugely positive. At this price, maybe now's the time to consider the Leaf.

Bumper to bumper

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caravans / motorhomes

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Golf, Bowls, Club.Why go Further?
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SE700kg, 2 berth, 1997, 13ft, full cooker, blinds, shower, cassette loo, awning, serviced, caravan cover, new tyres 1 owner, extras.
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ADULTS ONLY
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COACHMAN 520/4 VIP
2006, 4 berth, full cooker, end washroom, separate shower, blow air heating, alarm, CRIS registered.
£6,495.
07775 610823.

COACHMAN AMARA 520/4
2003, full and porch awnings, full oven, shower, toilet, fridge, blow air heating, cris reg.
£4,500 ono.
01922 479590 or 07957 742129.

COACHMAN GENIUS
2 to 3 berth, 1997, immaculate condition, end bathroom with full size shower, cassette toilet etc, warm air central heating, double glazed, blinds and side blinds, plus stabilizer with extras.
£2,700 ono
01785 713937

ELDDIS MISTRAL 1997, 2 berth, full oven,shower, cassette toilet, full awning. Top of range caravan, good reason for selling, £1,475. 07876 551286.

ELDDIS MISTRAL 1997, 2 berth, full oven,shower, cassette toilet, full awning. Top of range caravan, good reason for selling, £1,475. 07876 551286.

FORD TRANSIT Motorhome, 12 months MoT, 6 months tax, new cambelt, excellent condition. £5,250. Call 01922 713193.

LUXURY TWIN UNIT LODGES For Sale on the coast of West Wales. Sited on stunning new development with sea views. For info call Sean 07817 067191

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MOBILE HOME FOR SALE
In Armitage, 40ft x 20ft, 2 double bedrooms, enclosed gardens, big utility room, fully fitted kitchen + dining room.
£123,000.
07900 584148.
LOOK

MOTORHOME AUTO SLEEPER
symbol 2001, 2 litre petrol, tax, Mot, new gear box and clutch Sept. 2012, bike rack, aerial, 51,500 miles, awning, very good condition.
£15,750 ono hence price.
01543 686719 / 07527 459020.

STATIC CARAVAN
Beautiful two bed Swift Debut, 2005, decking, storage. At Marton Pool, Shrops. Lake view. Sailing, fishing, swimming, tennis. Shop/pub nearby.
£16,000 ono. 07792 625321.

STATIC CARAVAN
35ft x 12ft, quiet site in Mid Wales, extensive decking to side and rear, 2 bedrooms, blow air heating to bedroom and bathroom, trout and course fishing on site, play area for children.
£4,750.
01543 271148 / 07977 923748.

STATIC CARAVAN Cosalt 32 x 10, 3 bedroom, TV/DVD, fridge freezer etc. Haven site Perranporth £6,500. Call 0121 556 1900.

STATIC CARAVAN
LLanfair, Caereinion, 35 x 12. Excellent condition. Pretty, quiet, (Family run site). Mid Wales. Excellent rates.
£7,500.
01938 810 990.

STORAGE AVAILABLE CASSOA silver award. for caravans, boats etc. 07977 325096

LUXURY MODEL
2003 VANMASTER ACCOLADE
Luxury 2 berth, Rolls Royce of caravans, end washroom, separate shower, blow air heating, full cooker, fly screens and blinds, immaculate condition throughout.
£5,995.
07775 610823.

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All Caravans Wanted
Any Age or Condition
CASH WAITING
Immediate collection
Call Bill on 07760 344 750

holidays

caravan holidays

BOYCE HOLIDAY PARK and Cottages. Quiet park situated nr Bromyard. Static holiday homes sales, casual/seasonal touring and self-catering. Call for a colour brochure: 01886 884 248.

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Holiday homes for sale on country park in Staffordshire near historic Brewood.
Heated indoor pool, sauna, leisure club.
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Large six berth caravan Seafront site, sandy beach, picturesque views, club and shop.
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what's on

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Go Karts, Giant Slide, Roundabout, Bouncy Castle
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mind, body & soul

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3 Home & Services

carpets & furnishings

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HOUSE CLEARANCE SERVICE
CHASE ANTIQUES
(Over 35 years Trading)
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furniture

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THREE PIECE SUITE and footstool, terracotta cream, £250, also 2 seater settee red, with wood trim £75. 07724 765312.

in your garden

A LANDSCAPING & GARDEN SERVICE
Regular Mowing & Maintenance.
Jungles cleared & restored.
Garden tidy-ups. New lawns laid.
Paving, Hedge Cutting & Tree Surgery. Free estimates.
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All tree and hedge work undertaken
Fully insured and qualified
Over 30 years experience
24 hour call out/free quotations
Based at Hollybush Garden Centre
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A BARGAIN A lush green lawn turf, cut fresh in easy to lay rolls £1.40 per roll. Deliveries daily. Trent Valley Turf: 01902 738217.

A EXPRESS TURF SUPPLIES top quality turf, laying service available. 01902 898313, 07970 868787.

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CHEAP BRICKS £12 per 100 inc VAT, also red hand made brick, £28.90 per 100 inc VAT. Prices to clear. Ranton Building Supplies Limited, Cannock 01543 276006.

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items wanted

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01922 495066 OR 07971 783206

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Top Quality Kitchens
FREE fitting by May 25th
For FREE quotes call:
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07973 667965

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Laptops from £160 & PCs available.
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01543 439095
01922 716029
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All areas covered
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Vertical Blind Deals
From 7 for £179
Measured & Fitted!!!
GREAT FABRICS IN CREAM OR WHITE.
GREAT OFFERS ON...
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www.amandaforblinds.co.uk

building services

Naylor Building Services
• Garden Walls •
• Block Paving •
01922 441342/07818 047772

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• Windows and Staircases
• Domestic and Commercial Refurbishments
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0121 531 0264 / 07903 234 137

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A CLASS CARPET & UPHOLSTERY CLEANING
Carpets dry in 30 minutes.
Call Paul: 0800 112 3959
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QUALITY CARPET/upholstery cleaners. 1/2 price offers. Call 0121 246 9338 / 07813 841689.

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CARPETS FITTED from £25. Wet rooms, laminates, all aspects of flooring undertaken. Call: 07870 563268 or 01902 276345.

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GET THE FOG OUT!
Condensation removal from failed double glazing at least 50% cheaper than replacements.
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HomeCare
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Imprinted Concrete and Block Paving
01902 306046
www.homecare-group.co.uk

CONCRETE CREATIONS
Pattern imprinted concrete specialists, driveways/patios. Free quotes.
01902 834162, 07703 023280

external rendering

A FULL 15 YEAR GUARANTEE on all rendering work. Call for a free quote: Call 01902 366221.

gardening services

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ALL TREES FELLED, Garden Work and Rubbish Cleared. We will beat any quote - Call: 01922 862198 / 07756 544873.

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Radiators supplied and fitted from £40
A rated combi boilers supplied and fitted from £900
Full heating systems supplied and fitted from £1999
07535 877783 / 01922 601389

GAS SERVICES
• Boilers
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• Fires
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• Landlord Certificates
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Fitted, Serviced and Repaired
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Free Quotes
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A1 GUTTER CLEAN, repair & replaced, upvc wash downs, free quotes. 9am-8pm. 01902 722447.

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HANDY MAN - Most trades covered, plumbing, heating, gardening and decorating. 07850 559315.

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A ABSOLUTE cash price paid for house clearances and bereavements. Tel: 07852 172641.

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28 years experience.
Free quotes. All work guaranteed
01922 414999 / 07519 694516

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A RELIABLE PLUMBER no job too small, no call out fee. From dripping taps boilers. Call free: 07713 149278 / 01902 330351.

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STAG HEATING & PLUMBING All aspects of work undertaken. Gas Safe reg. Call Stag on 01543 426330 / 07736 686278.

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CHEAPER REMOVALS
NATIONWIDE, INSURED, FREE QUOTES
Single Items to Full Removals.
01902 894916 / 07807 773035

A & M CHEAP REMOVALS
Local
Careful Firm
Full or Part loads
Call Don:
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A MAN WITH A VAN Single items, flat/house removals/clearances, local/nationwide. Call Steve. 0121 422 2999 or 07815 043724

A2B REMOVALS Cheap and reliable removal service. Insured. 07817 842980 or 01902 744829.

CALL DEAN! Business/Domestic, Deliveries/Relocation/full house 1 item.07429 453209/01902 830870

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DJ REMOVALS house or one item courier. Nationwide. 24/7. Call: 01902 652346 or 07912 980177.

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Keeping it all under 1 Roof
• Quality, Reliability & Value
• Slating - Tiling - Flat Roofing
• Emergency Repairs
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• Guttering
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All Work Guaranteed
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Flat roofs, tiling, roof repairs, fascias and gutters.
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WE TOP THE LOT
ESTABLISHED OVER 60 YEARS
ONE OF THE LARGEST CENTRES AND SELECTIONS IN THE MIDLANDS
WE STOCK THE LOT
ROOFING TILES, SLATES, FELTS, VALLEY RIDGE, NAILS, LEAD, LATH, VENTILATORS, PLYWOOD, GAS BITUMEN, UPVC FASCIAS & SOFFITS, GUTTERING
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Various size skips at affordable prices
FAST AND RELIABLE SERVICE
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Wants your Waste! Stop the risk of flytipping.
Open to the public. Any size vehicle.
Any Quantity. For Best Prices
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MINI, MIDI & BUILDERS SKIPS WITH DOORS
Established 23 years
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CGS TILING Clean, reliable service. Competitive prices. No job too small. Telephone: 07862 297940.

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Re-upholstery of modern & antique furniture.
Fabric samples for you to choose in the comfort of your home.
Leather cosmetic repairs, scratches & colour loss
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07738 851601

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All Gates & Railings supplied and fitted
FREE QUOTES
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ALL GATES,RAILINGS, etc. Free quotes, also repairs/fitting plus Block paving 01902 606979 24 hrs.

4 Pets & Animals

equestrian corner

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FREE TO GOOD home 20yr old Mare, superb temperament, make ideal companion for another horse, all vac's up to date. 07733 100001.

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guns & dogs

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS
Advertisers must ensure that they meet all necessary legal requirements for owning and using guns.

AIR RIFLE make Weihrauch HW100 sport, excellent condition, £400 no offers. 07981 483111.

pets corner

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All neutered, innoculated and chipped.
Call Greyhound Trust
01922 412212 or
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NOTICE TO READERS
Please be aware that when purchasing a puppy there are some simple guidelines you can follow to ensure that you are not purchasing from a Puppy Farmer:
1. Try to ensure you visit the puppy whilst it is still with it's Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree.
Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

BUDGERIGARS Adults and Baby Budgies for talking from £20 each. 0121 5024372 Tipton.

CHOCOLATE LABRADOR Pups. KC assured breeder. Bitches remaining. £650. 01384 561351.

PEDIGREE SHIH-TZU puppies, small. 07866 326846.

YORKSHIRE TERRIERS KC registered, show quality, pedigree, 7 weeks old, from immaculate Family home. £325. 01902 851470.

5 Farming

agriculture

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6 Business

business opportunities

READERS are recommended to take appropriate professional advice before entering any obligations.

JOIN OUR TEAM AND BEAT THE BOSS find out more call 0121 314 5641

business services

ASBESTOS REMOVED from any surface. Call Greenfields NOW 01902 656 844 / 07964357008

businesses for sale

WANT TO SELL Your Business? Call John Southern at County Business Sales 01902 766724.

commercial premises sale / let

TO LET Modern industrial units. Many uses. Secured and gated. WS10 0NQ. Call 01902 421216.

plant, machinery & tools

BANDSAW ELEKTRA Bekum BAS450 WN, £350. 07840 507413.

business directory

accountants

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business opportunities

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Walsall area.
£4000 ono for quick sale due to personal reasons.
Serious Offers Only.
Contact Sonia
01922 642522 / 07595 300011

commercial premises

Industrial Units To Let
From 1,300 sqft.
Cannock Area
Call: 07702 501900

7 Property

accommodation to let

J9
No Deposit
Move In Today
from £99pw
Rooms from £60pw*
*Includes Most Bills
D.S.S WELCOME IN STUDIO/ROOMS
Bilston, Dudley, Walsall, Wednesbury, West Brom, Darlaston, Wolverhampton, 700+ Properties, New Daily, Check Website - Live List
WANTED LANDLORDS AND PROPERTIES
Tel 0121 568 7400
j9accommodation.com
Midland Landlord Accreditation Scheme

NOTICE TO READERS It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

GROUND FLOOR apartment, Braids Rise, Oldbury. Two bed. Parking. Unfurnished. Avaialble July. £500pcm 07788 196883

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10 Local Information

Public & Legal Notices

HIGHWAYS AGENCY

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 - SECTION 14(1)(A)
AND THE MOTORWAY TRAFFIC (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 1982 -REGULATION 16(2) THE M6 MOTORWAY (SOUTH OF JUNCTION 10A) (TEMPORARY RESTRICTION AND PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) ORDER 2013

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Secretary of State for Transport has made an Order on the M6 Motorway in the Metropolitan Borough of Walsall and the County of Staffordshire, to allow work to be carried out to electronic signalling equipment.

The effect of the Order will be to -
(a) impose a 50 miles per hour speed restriction on the southbound carriageway of the M6 from a point 200 metres south of the centreline of Red Lane/ Sneyd Farm overbridge to a point 500 metres south of the centreline of Willenhall Lane/ Woodlane underbridge; and
(b) close various lanes of the southbound carriageway of the M6 from a point 2000 metres south of its junction with the link road leading from eastbound carriageway of M54 (Junction 10a) for a distance of 900 metres and allow traffic to run on the hardshoulder.

Work will be carried out over one night between 22:00 hours and 05:00 hours and is expected to start on Thursday 30 May 2013. The Order will come into force on 24 May 2013.

Vehicles being used for police, fire brigade or ambulance purposes will be exempt from the speed limit and closures. Vehicles being used for special forces purposes will be exempt from the speed limit, and vehicles being used in connection with the works or by a traffic officer will be exempt from the closures.

For further information, please contact Phil Graham on 0117 372 8938.

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 - SECTION 14(1)(A) AND (7)
AND THE MOTORWAY TRAFFIC (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 1982 -REGULATION 16(2) THE M6 MOTORWAY (JUNCTIONS 10 TO 10A) (TEMPORARY RESTRICTION AND PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) ORDER 2013

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Secretary of State for Transport has made an Order on the M6 Motorway in the Metropolitan Borough of Walsall and the County of Staffordshire, to allow bridge inspection work to be carried out.

The effect of the Order will be to -
(c) impose a 50 miles per hour speed restriction on the northbound carriageway of the M6 from the centrepoint of the M6/A454/B4464 roundabout at Junction 10 to its junction with the M54 at Junction 10a;
(d) close various lanes of the length of motorway described in (a) above and allow traffic to run on the hardshoulder; and
(e) close the slip road leading to the northbound carriageway of the M6 at Junction 10.

Work will be carried out over one night between 22:00 hours and 06:00 hours and is expected to start on Saturday 1 June 2013. The Order will come into force on 28 May 2013.

Vehicles being used for police, fire brigade or ambulance purposes will be exempt from the speed limit and closures. Vehicles being used for special forces purposes will be exempt from the speed limit, and vehicles being used in connection with the works or by a traffic officer will be exempt from the closures. A diversion route during the slip road closure via M6 Junction 9 will be well signed.

For further information, please contact Matthew Read on 0121 678 4160.

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 - SECTION 14(1)(A)
AND THE MOTORWAY TRAFFIC (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 1982 -REGULATION 16(2) THE M6 MOTORWAY (JUNCTION 10A TO 9) (TEMPORARY RESTRICTION AND PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) ORDER 2013

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Secretary of State for Transport intends to make an Order on the M6 Motorway in the County of Staffordshire, to allow electronic signal work to carried out.

The effect of the Order will be to -
(a) impose a 50 miles per hour speed restriction on the southbound carriageway of M6 from a point 400 metres south of the centreline of the Bentley Lane overbridge to a point 100 metres north of its junction with the exit slip road at Junction 9; and
(b) close various lanes of the southbound carriageway of the M6 from a point 700 metres north of its junction with the exit slip road at Junction 9, to a point 100 metres north of that junction and allow traffic to run on the hardshoulder.

The work will be carried out over one night between 22:00 hours and 05:00 hours and is expected to start on Wednesday 19 June 2013. The Order will come into force on 12 June 2013.

Vehicles being used for police, fire brigade or ambulance purposes will be exempt from the speed limit and closures. Vehicles being used for special forces purposes will be exempt from the speed limit, and vehicles being used in connection with the works or by a traffic officer will be exempt from the closures.

For further information, please contact Matt Taylor on 0121 687 2550.

Mike Lloyd, A Higher Executive Officer in the Highways Agency.

LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES
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Walsall Council, Planning and Building Control

The below applications have been made to the Walsall Council.

Applications can be viewed at First Stop Shop, Civic Centre, Walsall or online www.walsall.gov.uk/planning

Representations can be made online, email: planningservices@walsall.gov.uk or in writing to Head of Planning and Building Control, Civic Centre, Darwall Street, Walsall, WS1 1DG.

Representations should be made within 21 days of the date of this notice.

Please note: Your letter and personal details will form part of the planning file which is a public document and will be available for inspection at the Council Offices. The information may be released as part of a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)
PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE ORDER 2010 (AS AMENDED)

13/0599/FL
Walsall Housing Group
FOR: Erection of 27 apartments for affordable rent with associated landscaping and parking
AT: Site at Wessex Close, Brownhills, Walsall, WS8 6HQ

13/0604/FL & 13/0605/LB
J D Wetherspoon
FOR: The addition of two gates to open access areas to left side elevation on Leicester Street to match existing gates on Lichfield Street
AT: ST MATTHEWS HALL,LICHFIELD STREET,WALSALL,WS1 1SX

13/0458/FL
Mr Gavril
FOR: Change of Use to Car Wash & Valeting.
AT: REAR OF PELSALL GARAGE LTD, 45 HIGH STREET, WALSALL, WS3 4LT

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Ian Guy on 07759 551092.

general

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Defeat by six wickets as Rushall off the top

Rushall 137, Wednesbury 138-4. Wednesbury won by six wickets

RUSHALL slipped off the top of the Staffs Clubs Division Two table after slumping to a poor home defeat against Wednesbury.

Rushall lost the toss and were invited to bat on a green track.

Only Andy Beech was able to cope with the tricky conditions, hitting a combative 53, as Dilip Mehmi (3-27) worked his way through the top order.

Only Robert Plant (25) was able to provide any late resistance as Dave Vincent (3-17) mopped up the tail.

Wednesbury were largely untroubled in reply as Omar Patel (54 not out) and Vaughan Whistance (34) saw them home to a comfortable six-wicket victory with seven overs to spare.

Rushall 181-8, Fordhouses 135. Rushall won by 46 runs

Rushall lifted themselves of the bottom of the Staffs Clubs Division Three table with an excellent win at Fordhouses.

Having been put in, Rushall were soon dominating the Fordhouses bowling.

Jack Clayton (37) led the way, with good support from Shaun Allsop (20).

The introduction of Jin Cheema and Rohit Khanna (3-21) slowed the run rate, as Rushall were restricted to 10 runs in 10 overs.

But they were able to break free for the last few overs with Matt Johnson (25) and Matt Jones (18 not out) putting on a half-century to finish on 181.

Paul Hopkinson (2-38) and Matt Jones reduced Fordhouses to 10-3. Cheema hit 38 before becoming one of Jones' three victims.

An excellent run out by Andy Callaghan saw Rushall win their first game of the season by 46 runs.

A Czar is born for boating

A YOUNG Staffordshire powerboater has clinched her place in a prestigious grand final.

South Staffordshire Sailing Club's Kamilla Czartolomna claimed victory at the Honda RYA Youth RIB Championship last weekend.

Czartolomna, aged 12, won on home water at the Gailey club during rain and blustery wind.

She will now fly the flag for the West Midlands when going head-to-head with the age-group victors of all the other regional deciders at the Honda RYA Youth RIB Championship national final. The showdown takes place at the PSP Southampton Boat Show on Sunday, September 15.

The championship is the Royal Yachting Association's grassroots powerboating initiative and emphasises safe manoeuvring.

Early start at cricket club

BLOXWICH cricket club are looking to catch their new recruits young.

The club are starting a new session for children aged three-plus to introduce them to basic skills, co-ordination and balance.

The sessions feature plenty of games and running around and begin on June 2 from 11am to noon.

Celebrations for Willenhall Rugby Club after doing the league and cup double in only their second season under coach Paul Coyne

History made as club doubles up

WILLENHALL Rugby Club are celebrating an unprecedented double success.

The first XV won both the Midlands West Three (North) league title and the Staffordshire Intermediate Cup, beating local rivals Handsworth 57-22 in the final earlier this month.

Club officials say the double has never been done before, and was achieved in Paul Coyne's second season as coach and under skipper Ben Potts' first campaign as captain.

Willenhall rounded off the season with a charity match against a Staffordshire President's side to raise money for Birmingham Children's Hospital.

Champions are back with valuable victory

CHAMPIONS Walsall got back to winning ways in the Birmingham and District Premier with a three-wicket win at home to Wolverhampton.

Fine bowling from Tom Freeman (3-19) reduced the visitors to 57-6, before Simon Lycett (30) and skipper Karl Quiney stopped the rot for the visitors.

Batting lower down the order at No.8 due to a broken finger, captain Quiney hit a courageous unbeaten 57 to steer his side to 166-9 at the end of the allotted 50 overs.

Craig Thyssen (44) and James Middleton (22) got Walsall to 39 off to a flying start but after a middle order wobble it took 34 from Tim Maxfield and an unbeaten 22 from Alex McChristie to clinch a valuable victory.

In Division Three, **Streetly**'s excellent start to the season continued with an eight-run victory over Bridgnorth preserving a perfect record.

Anup Revandkar (58) and Carl Griffin (54) hit half-centuries in Streetly's total of 221-8 but for a long while the visitors looked the more likely to win, particularly while Jono Whitney (41) and James Ralph were at the wicket.

But once they were dismissed Imran Khan (3-22) and Sam Bates (3-41) quickly rattled through the Bridgnorth line-up.

Penn suffered a three-wicket defeat at home to **Penkridge** after being limited to 168 batting first thanks to tight bowling from Mohammed Murad (4-14) and Laeq Chishti (3-35.)

Paul Szewyczyk (50 not out), Rana Hassan (36) and Alex Watson (33) were Penkridge's top scorers in the run chase.

Cannock suffered their second defeat on the spin as they crashed to a 100-run defeat at home to **Milford Hall**, after being bowled out for just 59 batting second.

Cricket

Top spot is shared by fishermen

TWO anglers shared top spot as the Reedswood AC Open matches made their return.

They were fished on Reedswood Pool in Walsall where Richard Broomhall (Beechdale AC) and Gary Page (Jessar AC) shared the top spot on 30-1-0.

Broomhall netted small carp and bream on pellet in the margins off peg 24 and Page landed carp to 5lb on paste at seven metres from peg 18.

Fosters' Mark Pitcher made third with seven carp for 27-0-0.

The Oak Pool at Boldings was employed for a Beechdale AC club competition and Mick Appleby showed his club-mates the way with an accomplished 91-10-0 bag of carp to 5lb, enticed on poled corn at four metres from peg 19.

A 66-9-0 corn caught net of carp to 3lb assured second for John Bradley ahead of match organiser Bill Bratt, third on 48-0-0.

Late goal flurry scuppers Shire Oak's hopes

Shire Oak Academy Under-15s' fine run took them all the way to the West Midlands Cup final, held at Great Barr

Shire Oak Academy U15 0
Woodlands U15 4

SHIRE OAK ACADEMY U15s were beaten 4-0 in the final of the West Midlands Cup by Woodlands, Coventry. Three late goals skewed the margin of victory as Shire Oak chased the game.

With a number of players unavailable for the final at the Birmingham County FA Ground in Great Barr, Shire Oak had to shuffle their starting line-up.

They started well, playing some attractive football, but Woodlands, who fielded a team full of district players, took the lead.

With only 10 minutes remaining, Shire Oak pushed hard for an equalising goal to take the fixture into extra-time. But they were left exposed at the back and Woodlands were able to capitalise on the counter- attack and score three late goals.

The Under-15 side have, however, had a terrific run in the regional competition and are the only side from the school to progress past the quarter finals. In total, 34 teams entered the competition across the West Midlands.

Shire Oak scored 14 goals in the competition, beating Streetly Academy, Walsall, Ernsford Grange School, Coventry, Heart of England, Solihull and Oldbury Academy, Sandwell. Manager and PE teacher Paul Banbery said; "It is a fantastic achievement for the team to have progressed this far in such a tough competition.

"No team from Shire Oak has ever gone further than the quarter-finals before. I would like to congratulate each member of the squad."

The squad consists of: Ben Cooling, Kieran Nelson, Reis Noirez, Jordan Barnard, Harry Merrell, Ashley Cullum, Jo Rudd, Sam Morrall, Matthew Cullen, Luke Copley, Nick Lee, Brandon Parker, James Bland, Josh Anderton, Nathan Hackett, Ryan Lowbridge, Dean Jackson and Josh Gittins.

A breeze as boxing mates go into final

WALSALL WOOD ABC'S Joseph Stevenson scored a sensational third-round stoppage to reach his first national amateur final and join club-mate Daniel Breeze in the junior ABA decider, ***writes Craig Birch.***

Connor Jones, from Lions ABC in Dudley, also reached his first national final in five years as all three made it a hat-trick of wins at Great Barr Leisure Centre.

The venue has staged the pre-quarter, quarter and Sunday's semi-finals and it's proved to be a happy hunting ground for Stevenson.

He has blazed a trail at 71kg in the most senior section – Class Six, for boxers born in 1995 – and has now taken out George Parrish, from Beartown ABC in Cheshire.

Two-time ABA schoolboys champion Breeze was nearly as comprehensive a winner at 66kg in Class Five – boxers born in 1996 – against Cory Fenwick, from Horden ABC in County Durham, in a points victory.

Jones will join him this weekend in his first final since the Schoolboys in 2008 after another unanimous points win over James Thompson, from Wellingtons ABC in Middlesbrough.

Opponent Thompson had reached a Clubs for Young People national final last year.

But Wednesbury ABC's Jack Wood is out after a majority points loss despite a valiant effort against Luke McCormack, from Birtley Boys ABC in Northumberland.

Impressive Cope's fine comeback

BLOXWICH'S Stafford Road bowls club A team had a 64-shot win at Greenheath, coming out on top by 182-118.

Hayley Scott, John Platt and Kelton Scott all came through as 21-8 winners while Ken Fencott went one better with a 21-7 card.

Jackie Squire was a 21-11 winner while Michael Moseley won 21-16 with a fine performance against Greenheath's captain.

But arguably the most eye-catching performance came from Cameron Cope, who hauled himself back from 15-4 down to win 21-18.

The B side were also handy winners, beating Duke of York B 184-130 at home. Peter Bellanti dropped just three shots while Trevor Kemp and Jane Shaw were both 21-6 winners and Ray Brown and Horace Parkes won 21-9.

Sheila Purchase bowled well on her comeback to lose by only 21-19 and Ashley Cope, a youngster making his league debut, won 21-13.

The club are running a beginners' session on Saturdays from 11am to noon for those aged 10 or over. Turn up or call 07761 348841.

League winners snatch it at end

Rushall Olympic U11 1
Lane Head Trojans U11 2

THE young Pics fought hard against the league winners in the season's last game.

They fell behind, but Reagan Palethorpe and Lucas Fallon both hit the bar. Jack Kemp equalised, but Lane Head took a late winner.

Tai Woffinden with his Czech GP trophy

GP winner can't wait for Cardiff

Speedway

TAI WOFFINDEN took his first speedway Grand Prix victory and declared: "I can't wait for Cardiff."

The Wolves star won the Czech GP on Saturday night to cap an amazing week which had also seen him crowned British champion for the first time at Monmore Green.

He then made the long drive to Poland for a league fixture on Sunday where he continued his fine form, dropping just two points and inspiring Wroclaw to a shock win at Leszno.

And Woffinden, the first Briton to win a GP in six years, said: "It still hasn't sunk in properly. I didn't get to sleep until 3am Sunday and then all my focus was on my Polish League fixture.

"When you look down the records, a rider who wins a Grand Prix on the Saturday doesn't always have a good meeting the following day in Poland and I wanted to ensure I did my job for the team. All I remember is the emotion I felt on the podium when the national anthem was played.

"That's when I started to realise what I'd achieved, but there is still a long way to go."

Victory took Woffinden to within a point of leader Emil Sayfutdinov, but the 22-year-old said: "I'm keeping my feet on the ground.

"Of course it's been an amazing week for me, but we're still only four rounds into the 12. My target is still the top eight."

And Woffinden is keen to pass on his thanks to everyone who has sent him congratulatory messages.

His Twitter account @woffinden108 was jammed on Saturday night and he received numerous text messages from friends.

He said: "Thanks to everyone who tweeted me. I want everyone to know it's very much appreciated. And to everyone who sent me a text, you know who you are, thanks. It means a lot. "But there is a long way to go. I can't wait for Cardiff!"

Cardiff was the venue in 2007 when Chris Harris became the last Briton to take the top step on a GP podium.

And it has special significance for Woffinden this year as he sets off on his cycle ride for Cancer Research UK next Tuesday, May 28. He leaves Monmore at 9am for the journey to the Millennium Stadium.

Said Woffinden: "I hope a few people can cheer me off next Tuesday and I'm desperate to raise as much money as possible. Then it's focus on Cardiff. I cannot wait for that!"

The British GP takes place at the Millennium Stadium on Saturday, June 1, at 5pm.

SPORT

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Oak are toppled in the big final
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Czech it out
Woffinden grabs his first GP win
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Looking out for No.1 – Saddlers

BOSS Dean Smith says he would not rule out another loan move to solve Walsall's keeper quandary.

Finding a new No.1 is one of the manager's main priorities this summer as the Saddlers have been without a permanent senior keeper on the books since the release of David Grof in March.

Last season Smith used four loan players to plug the gap during the second half of the season following his decision to drop Hungarian Grof for poor form.

Smith has already spoken to several keepers about a possible move. But he admitted he would not disregard another loan.

Smith said: "I have spoken to a couple of people already and there are others I want to speak to as well.

"Ideally I would like a permanent keeper coming in. But if that was not possible and it was a loan it would have to be a season-long deal with no recall clause, to give us some stability.

Grof was replaced by Karl Darlow, who was twice recalled by parent club Nottingham Forest. The Saddlers were also left short by recalls for Wolves' Aaron McCarey and MK Dons' Ian McLoughlin and finished the season with Manchester United youngster Sam Johnstone in goal.

Youth team keeper Liam Roberts was offered a pro deal at the end of the season.

Marsh: Pair should stay

WALSALL legend Chris Marsh says Will Grigg and Febian Brandy owe it to the club to sign new deals.

The forward pair's future is the biggest question mark currently hanging over the Saddlers. Both are out of contract in the summer.

Marsh, who made almost 400 appearances for the Saddlers over 13-years , believes both players should repay the faith shown in them by boss Dean Smith.

Grigg hit 20 goals while Brandy was one of the standout performers during the second half of the campaign.

Marsh said: "Dean has stuck with them and they have come good. I think they owe it to the club to stick around for another year.

"Walsall will never stand in anyone's way if they are offered money for a player if they want to go on to better things but it's my opinion they should stay."

Keane so eager to tackle his shot at the title

by Matt Maher

WALSALL boxer Chris Keane has landed a shot at the WBO international cruiserweight title.

The Midlands champion will face an as yet unnamed opponent for the vacant belt on the undercard of Martin Gethin's IBF Final Eliminator with Ammeth Diaz at Walsall Town Hall on Friday May 31.

Keane has been in explosive form of late, blowing away former British cruiserweight champion Shane McPhilbin to win the Midlands crown in January before disposing of Hungarian brawler Tamas Toth last month.

Those fights lasted just three and two rounds respectively and Keane is now taking a step up in class to fight for the international version of the World Boxing Organisation's belt.

In addition to winning the belt, Keane would earn an international ranking as he looks to build on his 10-fight unbeaten record.

It's a similar path to the one followed by Gethin, who secured his clash with Diaz in part after winning the lightweight IBF international crown last September to secure a ranking with the organisation.

Keane said: "It's a big opportunity for me. It's a chance to prove myself at a higher level, which is good. I'm feeling in the best shape of my career. I felt really good against Toth last month.

"My power and accuracy were there. I'm fighting more regularly too which is helping." Keane says he is ready for the step up in class and believes the raucous home crowd will help spur him, and indeed fellow hometown hero Gethin, on to victory.

He added: "I listen to my trainers – Paul Hudson and Dean Edwards – and they say I'm ready to push on.

"I believe in what they tell me and if they say I'm ready, that's good enough for me. It's good to be fighting in Walsall again though. The atmosphere at the Town Hall is electric."

As well as Gethin and Keane, the undercard features Wolverhampton super-featherweight Dezzie Bowater and West Bromwich welterweight Tom Stokes who both make their professional debuts.

Undefeated Stafford super-middleweight prospect Grant Cunningham is also in action along with top Welsh super-featherweight Craig Evans . Tickets are available from Walsall Town Hall Box Office on 0845 111 2900. Doors will open at 6.00pm and boxing will commence at 6.30pm.

BOXER GETHIN ROPES IN KUNG FU EXPERT

WALSALL'S Martin Gethin has enlisted the help of a Kung Fu expert to help chop through Ammeth Diaz when the pair clash in a final eliminator for the IBF world title.

Gethin sought the advice of strength and conditioning guru Nico Kolokythas and has been working with him every day during his training camp.

And the British lightweight champion believes it will help master the art of belting the Panamanian pugilist when the two clash at Walsall Town Hall a week tomorrow.

by Craig Birch

He said: "I am feeling in the best shape I have ever been in.

"Nico is teaching me little techniques and has been tweaking my regime to get the best out of me. I can feel the difference,.

"Nico has been studying and practising Kung Fu for 15 years and is head coach at the Walsall campus of Wolverhampton University.

Rumble

"He has brought elements of his training in to the work he is doing with me.

"He's looked at my stability and mobility and made me feel extra sharp and super fit."

The 29-year-old staged an open training session at the Saddlers Shopping Centre in Walsall last weekend as he drums up support for his hometown rumble.

Home advantage could prove key in his battle against Diaz, also 29, who has already boxed for the title and is the favourite to land a shot at champion Miguel Vazquez. Gethin said: "I'm definitely ready. It's the kind of fight a boxer dreams of.

"Winning the British title in January was a massive thing for me.

"Now I'm ready to push on again and prove myself at the top level of boxing. I have worked hard to get to this point.

"I have been a professional boxer for nine years and had 28 pro fights to get to this point. It's been a long road but it's been worth it.

"Everything I have got out of boxing has come through hard work and dedication. Nothing has been given to me without a fight."

Tickets for the show are available from Walsall Town Hall Box Office on 0845 111 2900.

The show will also be live and exclusive on BoxNation on Sky Channel 437 and Virgin Channel 546.

Martin Gethin, centre, at a training session with boxers Des Bowater, left, and Tom Stokes at the Saddlers Centre

Summer football tournaments

THE football season may be nearing its end, but Sporting Khalsa are already looking forward to staging two summer tournaments. The first, for youths and adults, is on Sunday, July 7 at Lion Farm playing fields in Oldbury. The second, on Saturday, July 20, at Warwick University in Coventry is for adults. Details from **contactus@sportingkhalsa.com**

Wood in mood to celebrate success

WALSALL WOOD'S presentation evening celebrated the most successful season in the club's history.

Wood won the Midland Combination Premier by 15 points. It was their first league title since 1952 when they won that league's forerunner, the Worcester Combination, at the first time of asking.

This season Wood also had an incredible FA Vase run, going to the last eight before losing to Guernsey. They also reached the final of the Les James Memorial Cup, losing to Brocton after six weeks of playing three matches a week took its toll.

With the league trophy on show, manager Mark Swann handed out the awards.

Skipper

Players' player of the year went to Shawn Boothe while Andre Gonzales lifted the trophy for most man of the match awards.

Goalscorer of the season with 26 – nine in the Vase run – went to Ahmet Bilgimer and manager's player of the season went to skipper Lee Stretton.

Wood now look forward with optimism to next season, their first in the Midland Alliance.

Few would have marked them down for the Midland Combination crown after they finished 14th the season before, but their 61-year wait was ended in style.

Together with surprise package Littleton FC, who were runners-up, they took the league by storm and won the title despite an horrendous fixture pile-up that saw them play 17 games from April 1 to May 15 and take 38 points from 15 league matches in the process.

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